

D - 2464

CONFIDENTIAL  
DRAWER

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
S. B. D. 2464  
5 3 32

The Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury, Friday, March 4, 1932

## Thorburn Award Commission Makes Known Its Findings

Payment of \$5,000, the full amount of the reward offered by The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury, for information other than circumstantial as to the whereabouts of Mr. John Hay Thorburn, 19-year-old British subject who disappeared last spring from his home in Shanghai, has been made to Mr. W. A. Rettig, as member of the Award Commission of these.

Mr. Rettig, formerly proprietor of a private detective agency in Shanghai, spent more than three months in working on the case, and presented his findings to The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury a short time before the Chinese National Government's second Commission of Inquiry made public its discovery that Mr. Thorburn had been shot and killed by Col. Huang, commander of the First Kiangsu Regiment of Gendarmes, at Soochow.

The Chinese government cashier-

ed the officer placed him on trial, and he received a sentence of 11 years in jail which is now being served. The apologies of the Chinese National Government were tendered to and accepted by the British Government.

The award commission which viewed all claims for participation in the reward offer was composed of Mr. H. Lipson, War correspondent, Shanghai attorney, Mr. J. C. Marshall, of the British Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. A. M. French, of the American Chamber of Commerce.

Although these gentlemen served in an honorary capacity, they gave unstintingly of their time and care in sorting claims and hearing evidence, and The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury wishes to take this opportunity to thank them for their assistance for rendering so valuable a public service.

D.b. (brime)

Information.

M. Givens

O. i/c Sp. Br.

MAR 4 1932

File carefully

5:3:32



COVERING INDEX TO FILE D.2464 - JOHN HAY-THORBURN  
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Serial No.

S U B J E C T

- 1 Willian John Hay-Thorburn, 19 years of age, British subject, missing from home, 315 Rue Bourgeat from 8.30 p.m. 31.5.31.  
Attached: photograph of W.J. Hay-Thorburn.
- 2 Enquiries re missing John Hay-Thorburn.  
Shooting of Railway Police by foreigner alleged to be Russian, but suspected to be a British subject, named William John Hay-Thourburn.  
Reports made by D.I. Ross on 5.6.31, 6.6.31 and 6.6.31.  
Foreigner arrested for alleged shooting at Weiting.  
Report made by Supt. Tan Shao Liang on 6.6.31.  
Report in Chinese Press re shooting of 2 Chinese Military Policemen by an alleged Russian in Quinsan.  
Report made by D.S.I. Moore on 12.6.31.
- 3 Two soldiers of the Chinese Military Police, Li Kue Zang and Sung Li Sung admitted to St. Luke's Hospital, suffering from gun-shot wounds.  
Statement of Sung Li Sung.  
Death of Li Kue Zang.  
Report made by Supt. Yorke on 9.6.31 re statement of Sung Li Sung.
- 4 Report of Officer i/c S.B. forwarding a bullet said to have been extracted from the body of the soldier who was wounded at Quinsan.  
Report of Arms Identification Section No. 1585 dated 11.6.31 re mentioned bullet.
- 5 Report submitted by C.D.C. 271 re inquiries regarding the foreigner who was arrested near Weiting and Chen-I.  
Supplementary statement of C.D.C. 271 Zah Kwei Digh.
- 6 Arrest of foreigner at Chen-I.  
Reports made by C.D.I. Robertson on 19.6.31 and 17.6.31.  
Expenses incurred by C.D.S.I. Pan Lien Peh re arrest of a foreigner at Chen-I.  
Arrest of foreigner at Quinsan.  
Report made by D.S.I. Pan Lien Pih.
- 7 Report by the Shanghai Times on the John Thorburn Case.  
Report made by D.S. Golder on 23.7.31.
- 8 Motor car chit, issued by the Taylor Garage bearing the date 3.6.31, purporting to have been signed by W.J. Hay-Thorburn.  
Report made by D.S.I. Montgomery on 13.7.31.  
Supplementary statement of Hsu Ah Foo, chauffeur employed with Taylor Garage.  
Movements of J. Hay-Thorburn prior to his disappearance.  
Report made by D.I. Ross on 5.8.31.

Serial No.

S U B J E C T

- 9 Chit signed by W.J. Hay-Thorburn at Pala-ce Hotel, bearing date of June 1, 1931.  
Report made by D.I. Ross on 8.6.31.
- 10 Supplementary statement of Hsieh Hsin-fu, regarding the obtaining by him a handbag and articles of clothing from an unknown boat-woman in Henli.  
Report made by D.I. Ross 7.8.31.  
Attached: Statements.
- 11 Newspapers cuttings and translations from Chinese newspapers re disappearance of J. Hay-Thorburn from June 3, 1931.
- 12 Article contained in the Sin Wan Pao dated August 8, 1931.  
Report made by C.D.I. Robertson on 8.8.31.  
Report made by O. i/c S.B. on 5.8.31. re local Soviet circles are in possession of information confirming that J. Thorburn is dead.

13 *DC Fring's letter to H. B. W. Samuel Genl re <sup>murder</sup> Oct 27 1931 case.*



# THE CASE OF MR. JOHN THORBURN

## Full Story of Murder Told in Documents Submitted to the Commons

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

London, Nov. 24.

The following questions and answers in the House of Commons during the week ended November 24 now appear in Hansard. It will be noticed that in reply to a question by Sir B. Falle the Government circulated the full text of the Chinese report on the death of Mr. John Thorburn, which throws a rather different light upon the matter than was given by the telegraphic summary which was issued early in November.

Sir Charles Cayzer asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any claim for compensation from Mr. John Thorburn's relatives has now been received and considered; and what steps he proposes to take to press this claim against the Chinese Government?

Mr. Eden: Mr. Thorburn's father has now requested that His Majesty's Minister should lodge a claim for compensation with the Chinese Government. My right hon. Friend is not yet in receipt of full details, but the request is being considered as urgently as possible.

Sir B. Falle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will furnish this House with the text of the final reply of the Chinese Government to the representations of His Majesty's Government in the matter of the death of Mr. John Thorburn; and if he will press for an identification of the burial place of the remains of Mr. Thorburn?

Mr. Eden: The text of the reply of the Chinese Government and a summary of the report attached to it, which had been received by telegraph from His Majesty's Minister in China, were published in the Press on November 4. I will circulate in the Official Report the text of the note and the complete report which has now been received. I am in communication with His Majesty's Minister in regard to the matter referred to in the second part of the question.

*Hansard then includes the Note from the Chinese Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, which has already been published in full in these columns, and also the full report of the Chinese investigation, of which only a telegraphic summary was made available at the time of the publication of the Note. The full translation is as follows:—*

The Joint Military Court held to inquire into the disappearance of Thorburn, having completed the investigation, its Findings and Judgment are respectfully set out as follows:

### The Arrest

(1) At about ten o'clock in the night of June 1, 1931, Sub-Lieutenant P'eng Heng of the Gendarmerie stationed at Quinsan was ordered to lead his men out on patrol along the Shanghai-Nanking Railway line. He sent on ahead as patrols the three Gendarmes Li Kuo-ts'ai, Shen Li-sheng and Wu I-sen. When they had proceeded to the neighbourhood of Cheng I Railway Station, they saw a suspicious looking person walking hurriedly along the railway track. They challenged him and called on him to halt. He paid no attention.

They advanced to investigate and discovered him to be a foreigner. They then interrogated him. The foreigner however made no reply but fired his pistol and shot and wounded the two Gendarmes Li Kuo-ts'ai and Shen Li-sheng. They fell, but Wu I-sen whilst the soldiers behind were coming up courageously advanced and seized him. At this moment the express train from Shanghai to Nanking came by. The soldiers stepped aside and the foreigner wrenched himself loose and escaped.

He dropped a bag containing a pistol and a clip of cartridges, a knife and a cartridge-belt containing nineteen cartridges, a small bottle of chloroform and a gauze face mask, a long black kerchief, one white shirt and a bunch of keys. When this was reported to the Company Headquarters of the Gendarmerie reinforcements were sent out who continued the search and pursuit until dawn of June 2, when Wu I-sen recognised and arrested the foreigner near the eastern end of the Cheng I Railway station buildings. Twenty dollars in Chinese notes were found on him. These, together with the articles found previously, were sent to the Company Headquarters of the Gendarmerie at Quinsan, where the prisoner was questioned. His photograph was taken and in the afternoon of the same day he was conveyed to the Regimental Headquarters at Soochow to be dealt with.

### Held by Military

(2) After the said foreigner had been sent to the Regimental Headquarters at Soochow, Colonel Huang Chen-wu himself subjected him to further examination. The foreigner's behaviour was extremely insolent. When asked whether his name was "Sen-scout Troop" he replied, "Yes." Asked his nationality, he replied: "I live at Shanghai. Send me to Shanghai and you will then find out." Asked for his passport, he replied, "None." When shown the bag and its contents and asked whether they were his, he replied "Yes." When asked why he had shot the Gendarmes, he defiantly refused to reply. Because of the report from the Company Headquarters that a brigand had been arrested and because the foreigner had no passport, had carried two pistols, chloroform and a gauze face mask, etcetera, and because he had bought no railway ticket although he had twenty dollars in notes, and because he had been walking hurriedly on the railway track, the Colonel concluded that the man must be a foreign communist desperado. He consequently intended to send him to the Law Courts for trial. But as the wounded Gendarmes Li Kuo-ts'ai and Shen Li-sheng had already been sent to hospital at Shanghai for treatment, Colonel Huang decided to wait until they had somewhat recovered so that he could ascertain clearly the circumstances in which the foreigner had shot them before sending him on for trial. He therefore had the foreigner detained in the Barracks.

### Shot by Colonel

Li Kuo-ts'ai died on June 7, and it was reported that there was no hope for Shen Li-sheng (who died later on June 12). Colonel Huang then decided to send the foreigner to trial. He accordingly summoned the foreigner in the morning of June 8 for a further interrogation. The foreigner, however, still refused to state

directly who he was. All he would say was that he lived at Shanghai. After much cross-questioning he at last fully confessed that he had shot the Gendarmes. Asked where the revolver was with which he had shot and wounded the Gendarmes, he replied that he had thrown it into the water. After having questioned him thus far, the Colonel, unable to control his indignation, reviled the foreigner and cursed him as an outlaw. Hearing these words, the foreigner suddenly sprang at the Colonel, whom he took by surprise and struck him fiercely. The Colonel, in the face of the fierce aspect and savage strength of the foreigner, drew his pistol and shot him dead.

(3) After he had killed the foreigner Colonel Huang Chen-wu realised that he had exceeded what was justifiable in self-defence, and being afraid of incurring punishment, he caused to be destroyed all traces of the evidence, including the corpse, and gave strict orders to all his men not to divulge a word of what had passed, in the hope of covering up the matter. Thus it came about that the first investigation failed to reveal what had actually happened.

### Identification Complete

(4) The facts above set out were subsequently elicited by inquiries pursued at the various Company and Regimental Headquarters of the Gendarmerie. Clues were obtained through strict examination of Sub-Lieutenant P'eng Heng and others. Repeated cross-questioning of Sergeant Liu Chang-wen and others at last resulted in eliciting the facts of the case and in the identification beyond doubt of the foreigner in question as the man Thorburn who had disappeared. Colonel Huang Chen-wu was thereupon cashiered and sent to trial. This Ministry constituted a Joint Military Court before which the accused Huang Chen-wu at first denied his guilt, relying on the destruction of the evidence. But when he was later confronted by the evidence collected he made a full confession of the above facts. As regards the point concerning the identification of the foreigner in question as Thorburn, Colonel Huang was shown the photograph of Thorburn communicated by the British authorities when they were pressing for an investigation, and said it was indeed the man whom he had shot and killed. The facts of the case having been clearly ascertained, judgment was passed.

(5) The findings of the Joint Military Court were to the effect that the said Colonel Huang Chen-wu was according to law to be punished for his crime by being sentenced to a term of fourteen years' imprisonment. It is on record that he has already commenced to serve the sentence of imprisonment.

Seal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*Commissioner of Police,  
Sir  
Information  
J. H. Jones*

O. i/c Sp. Br.  
15.12.31

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REGISTRY  
S. B. D. 2464/H.  
16.12.31

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
 C. & S. I. REGISTRY  
 S. B. D. 2464/11.  
 6. 12. 31.

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1931

### Col. Huang Serving His Sentence

NANKING, Dec. 3.—The report that Colonel Huang, who was sentenced by the Chinese authorities to 14 years' imprisonment in connection with the death of Mr. John Thurston, is being retried, was emphatically denied here to-day.

Colonel Huang, it is stated, is now serving his sentence. —Kenter.

File JH

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Extract from Chinese Newspapers Translation

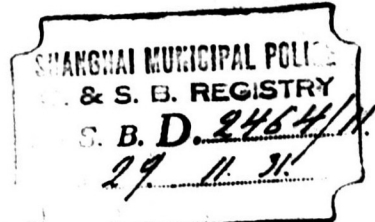
13.11.31.  
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The Thorburn Case

The Sin Wan Pao publishes the following telegram from Nanking:-

Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China, paid a visit to Li Ching Luen, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs on November 12.

It is reported that during the interview Sir Miles discussed the conclusion of the Thorburn case and the date on which signature will be affixed to the document relating to this case.



Extract from Chinese Newspapers Translation

14.11.31.  
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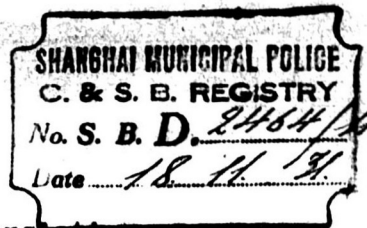
The Thorburn Case

The China Times and other local newspapers publish the following report:-

According to information received from diplomatic circles, Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China, arrived the other day in Nanking from Peiping by a Ford aeroplane in company with Dr. Wellington Koo.

It is learned that Sir Miles Lampson will effect a settlement of the Thorburn case with Dr. Lee Ching Lung, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, and will also exchange views on the continuance of the negotiations over the Sino-British extraterritoriality problem.

It is reported that the interview between Sir Miles Lampson and Dr. Lee Ching Lung will take place after the solution of the Sino-Japanese conflict.



Extract from Chinese Newspapers Translation

11.11.31.  
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The Thorburn Case

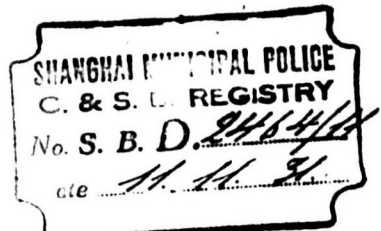
The Sin Wan Pao publishes the following telegram from Peiping:-

Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China, will leave Peiping on November 11 for Nanking where he will bring about the settlement of the Thorburn Case with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Another report states that Sir Miles will travel to-day in a Ford aeroplane in company with Dr. Wellington Koo.



(H.)



Extract from Chinese Newspapers Translation

2.11.31.  
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The Thorburn Case

The editor of the China Times published the following comment on November 1:-

After thorough investigations made by the Chinese Government into the disappearance of Thorburn, it has been found that he left Shanghai for Chenju by train on June 1 and using his pistol, injured two soldiers who succumbed to their injuries. This caused resentment by soldiers on duty there. They caught and sent him to Soochow where he was assaulted and fatally injured. Upon discovery, the Chinese Government arrested and placed the Regimental Commander Wang in custody.

In view of the fact that relations between China and Great Britain are closer, we regret the occurrence of this unfortunate case. Although Thorburn was wrong in killing two soldiers, the Chinese soldiers failed to refer Thorburn to their Commander but instead they assaulted and fatally injured him; such acts being a violation of the law. The Chinese Government will certainly inflict severe punishment on these soldiers. However we hope that both Governments will treat this affair as a usual military and criminal case and will not enlarge it which would simply afford irresponsible persons the chance to provoke instigations.

Extract from Chinese Newspapers Translation

4.11.31.  
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The Thorburn Case

The Sin Wan Pao publishes the following telegram from Nanking:-

It is reported that after consultation with Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will bring about a settlement of the Thorburn case immediately Sir Miles receives instructions from his home Government. Apart from punishing the military official concerned, the Chinese Government will probably give compensation to the family of the deceased.

11.

2877

# THORBURN CASE CLEARED UP BY CHINESE NOTE

## Shanghai Youth Shot Dead by Officer During Interrogation

### ALL EVIDENCE DESTROYED

### 14 Years' Imprisonment For Colonel Huang Who Killed Him

THE mystery of the disappearance of Mr. John Hay Thorburn, the Shanghai youth who left Shanghai at the end of May for Nanking, was involved in a shooting affair with Chinese gendarmes at Quinsan, and after his arrest was never seen again, is cleared up in a Note from the Nanking Government to Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister.

The Note, to which is attached a summary of a translation of the report, reveals that Mr. Thorburn shot and fatally wounded two gendarmes and was arrested near Quinsan on June 2. He was subsequently interrogated by the Regimental Commander, Colonel Huang Chen-wu, who "lost his temper and provoked by the behaviour of the prisoner, drew his pistol and shot Thorburn dead." Col. Huang then destroyed all evidence, including disposing of the corpse and ordered his men to keep silent.

Tried by court martial, Col. Huang was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment. Nanking has been orally informed that this settlement of the incident is acceptable to H. M. Government.

## NANKING EXPRESSES REGRETS

The first document consists of a Note from Mr. Chinglun W. Frank Lee, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Sir Miles Lampson, H. M. Minister to China, dated October 20, in which Mr. Lee states:

Sir:—With reference to the case of the disappearance of Mr. John Hay Thorburn, I have the honour to recall that in June last, based on certain reported facts concerning the case, an investigation was made at Quinsan and Soochow by the British Consular authorities, and that the result of this investigation was communicated to this Ministry together with certain papers tending to show that Mr. Thorburn was involved in the shooting affair which occurred near Quinsan on the night of June 1, and was arrested by the gendarmes on the morning of June 2 and taken to Soochow on the same day.

When it was known that the inquiry conducted early in July by the representatives of the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to reveal the same facts as found by the British Consular officials, Your Excellency communicated on July 29 to my predecessor, by instruction, a special message from the British Government to the Head of my Government who, as Your Excellency was notified on August 6, immediately ordered General Chen Yi, Vice-Minister of War, to make a thorough investigation of the matter.

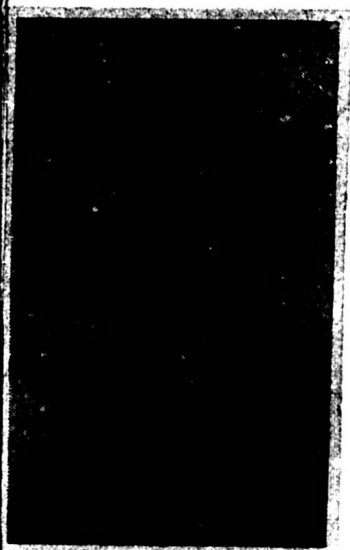
### Gen. Chen's Investigation

On account of the loss of all direct evidence which caused much difficulty at the initial stage of the investigation, General Chen proceeded with his work with especial care and circumspection, which accounts for the fact that his labours could not have been concluded as early as the Government desired.

On September 25, however, when General Chen's investigation had reached a satisfactory stage, my predecessor was able to inform Your Excellency that the arrest of Mr. Thorburn had been established and that the person involved in the affair had been placed under detention.

I have now received a full report from General Chen Yi, a copy of which is attached to the present note. From this report it is evident that the fears of the British Government as to the fate of Mr. Thorburn have been justified. It is with the utmost regret that the Chinese Government was to inform Your Excellency that Mr. Thorburn, after he had shot and wounded two gendarmes who subsequently died, was arrested near Quinsan on June 2 and met his death at Soochow at the hands of Colonel Huang Chen-wu on June 8. The Chinese Government further regrets that it is now clear from the report that Colonel Huang Chen-wu sought to suppress the truth as to what had occurred even from the Government itself.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY  
C. & S. D. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464/24  
Date 5. 11. 34



Mr. J. H. Thorburn.

File  
5.11.34

#### Why He was Not Handed Over

It may be recalled that the shooting affair near Quinsan occurred just at the time when the general menace of subversive activities in this country was at its height and when orders had been given to the gendarmerie to keep vigilance on all suspects in the regions traversed by the Nanking-Shanghai Railway. It was in these circumstances that Mr. Thorburn was arrested after the shooting incident and taken to Soochow. His own violent conduct, the strange articles found among his belongings, and his refusal to reveal his name and nationality, inevitably produced the suspicion that he was bent on some activity dangerous to the safety of the State. It was therefore owing to this state of apprehension and to the initial absence of any means of establishing Mr. Thorburn's identity that he was not handed over to the British authorities after his arrest.

As the report shows, a sentence of imprisonment for fourteen years has been imposed upon Colonel Huang Chen-wu as a result of a trial by court-martial, and I wish to add that the Chinese Government has caused the verdict to be communicated to all the military commanders.

The Chinese Government feels thankful for the help afforded by the British officials in supplying all the evidence at their disposal thereby contributing in no small degree to the eventual elucidation of what had occurred.

#### In conclusion, I wish to re-affirm

the determination of the Chinese Government to uphold the modern conception of justice and see it administered within the Chinese territory and hope that the action taken by the Chinese Government in this case will convince the British Government of the sincerity of China's professions in the matter.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

#### Summary of Report

Accompanying the Note is a summary of the report, which reads: "On the night of June 1 three gendarmes, patrolling the line met and challenged a suspicious character hurrying along the railway

track. As the foreigner disregarded their challenge, they approached to investigate, whereupon the foreigner shot down two of the gendarmes. At this moment the express passed and the foreigner escaped. He dropped a bag containing a pistol and cartridges, a knife, a small bottle of chloroform and gauze face cover, and other articles. He was arrested next day and taken to Soochow where he was examined by the Regimental Commander Colonel Huang. He refused to say who he was except that he came from Shanghai, had no passport, admitted the bag was his, and refused to give any reasons for shooting the gendarmes. Colonel Huang in view of suspicious circumstances believed prisoner to be a foreign communist and intended sending him to the law courts. He desired, however, to await the recovery and evidence of the wounded gendarmes first. On June 7, Colonel Huang learned that one of the wounded men had died and that the other could not recover. He accordingly interrogated Thorburn again on June 8. In the course of this further interrogation Colonel Huang lost his temper and provoked by the behaviour of the prisoner, drew his pistol and shot Thorburn dead. Colonel Huang then realising what he had done, destroyed all evidence, including the corpse, and ordered his men not to divulge anything. In this way the first investigation failed. Subsequently the true facts were elicited from subordinate officers. Colonel Huang was arrested, brought to trial by court-martial and sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment."

The Nanking Government has been orally informed that this settlement of the incident is acceptable to H. M. Government."

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464/H.  
by C. H. H.

# Nanking Seeking Source Of Post's Thorburn Report

## Semi-Official Inquiry Gets Under Way In Capital

### LONDON SATISFIED WITH NEW FINDINGS

#### Satisfactory Basis Now Reached For Final Settlement

(Post Special Service)  
NANKING, Nov. 2.—A semi-official investigation was begun here today to determine how news of the contents of the Chinese Government's note to Great Britain on the Thorburn case became available to the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury in advance of any official release by other government.

Meanwhile, although there has been no denial by either government that The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury's report was correct, the utmost secrecy regarding the full version of the note still is maintained.

Shanghai Office:  
Dairen  
Hankow  
Harbin  
Nanking  
Shanghai  
Tientsin  
Yokohama

HEAD OFFICE: TIENTSIN  
Capital  
Reserve  
11,000,000  
1,000,000  
100,000,000  
Incorporated 1916

Corporation  
The Kinchen Bank  
Incorporated in Hongkong

Authorized Capital  
Paid-up Capital  
Reserve Fund  
100,000,000  
1,000,000  
1,000,000

Head Office: HONGKONG  
(Incorporated in Hongkong)  
Limited  
The Bank of East Asia  
72, SZECHUEN ROAD  
Shanghai Branch:  
72, SZECHUEN ROAD

Terms on application.  
Sole deposit boxes in room  
of banking business transac-  
tion of the world every day  
Correspondents in all principal  
cities of the world.  
100,000,000  
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THE SHANGHAI FREE PRESS

## Strong London Comment On Thorburn Case And "Extrality" Surrender

Lord Lloyd Says That Protection Of Consular  
Jurisdiction Should Not Be Abolished  
Until Parliament Has Approved

"NEWS CHRONICLE" POINTS OUT HOW  
CHINA ENDANGERS HER CAUSE

LONDON, Oct. 31.—The newspapers to-day again give prominence to the Thorburn case and there is very pungent criticism of what is regarded as the inability of the Chinese Government to maintain law and order. In a letter to the "Times," Lord Lloyd, the former High Commissioner of Egypt and the Sudan, referring to the agreement which it is understood Sir Miles Lampson negotiated with Dr. C. T. Wang, the former Chinese Foreign Minister, cites the Thorburn case as a reason why extraterritoriality rights should not be abolished, at any rate until Parliament has been given an opportunity to review the whole question.

The comments of the papers on the Thorburn case are based upon the Chinese report of the official investigation into Thorburn's disappearance. It is understood that this report states that Thorburn, when halted by troops in Soochow, drew his revolver and shot two soldiers. He was then over-powered and after being paraded through the streets of Soochow was killed. The disposition of the body, it is stated, still remains a mystery.

The "News Chronicle" states that the alarming feature of the Thorburn case is not merely that such an outrage should be possible, but that it is so difficult to suggest any really adequate measures for the protection of the lives of British residents against such a fate.

Lord Lloyd is quoted as saying, "The paper, 'the Chinese Government, with the reason from which they came, will be the first to see the peril to which they are exposed, their cause is the cause of the British community in China, and they are bound to make every effort to protect it."

Lord Lloyd offers the general understanding that Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China, has recently negotiated a treaty with the Chinese Foreign Minister under which Britishers will be finally deprived of the protection of consular jurisdiction.

He declares it to be the unanimous opinion and the urgent plea of British communities in China that no such treaty should be concluded until its conditions have been submitted to, and approved by Parliament.

### A Memento Prospect

Lord Lloyd, in support of his contention, quotes the Thorburn case and says the prospect of any stable and effective Central Government being established in China is extremely remote.

He also mentions the difficulties with Japan to the absence of a Government in China which is able to maintain order and protect the interests of foreigners and, finally, points to the fact that the Foreign Minister, with whom Sir Miles Lampson has been negotiating in Nanking, has now resigned from the Central Government.





Completion

**BASIS AFFORDED FOR  
A SETTLEMENT?**

LONDON, Oct. 22.—The negotiations which have been proceeding for some time between the British and Chinese Governments with reference of the fate of Mr. John Thorburn, a British subject, are approaching completion. Reuters Agency learns that the Foreign Office has received a dispatch from Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister in China, which is understood to afford a basis for the settlement of the affair.—Reuters



2562

2484/H.  
29. 10. 31.**THE THORBURN  
CASE****Chinese Reply Received  
in London****OFFICIAL RETICENCE****"A Considerable Advance"  
but—**

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

London, Oct. 26.

I am informed that the tenor of the reply of the Chinese Government to the British Government's demands for a further Report on the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn, as the result of the second investigation ordered by General Chiang Kai-shek, has been communicated to the Foreign Office here. The nature of the proposals has not been disclosed and officials are very reticent on the subject. Although the reply, in certain material respects, represents a considerable advance on the Chinese Government's original attitude, there appear to be questions of vital importance to be settled before it can be considered that a satisfactory outcome has been reached. This seems to account for the guarded view taken in Whitehall.

**History of the Case**

The following is a chronological record of the history of the case:—

June 1. Mr. John Thorburn left Shanghai in search of adventure.

June 2. Believed to have been arrested by Chinese gendarmes.

June 3. Reported in the Chinese press that a foreigner challenged on the railway line near Weiting, on the night of June 1, fired and wounded two soldiers, making good his escape. He was arrested on the following morning and sent to Soochow under escort.

June 5. Mr. A. L. Scott, of the British Consulate, visited Soochow to make enquiries regarding Mr. Thorburn's disappearance.

June 10. Last credible evidence of Mr. Thorburn's having been seen alive.

July 16. Official report by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to British Government disclaiming all knowledge of Mr. Thorburn or the arrest of any foreigner.

July 21. Meeting of the China Association passes a resolution urging the British Government to adopt measures to secure exhaustive investigation.

Telegram with 2,800 signatures of Shanghai residents despatched to London demanding suitable action in the case.

July 28. Mr. Shiang, the original investigator appointed by the Chinese Government into the case died as the result of a ricin accident.

July 25. Mr. Henderson instructs Sir Miles Lampson to take the case to General Chiang Kai-shek.

July 23. Sir Miles Lampson arrives in Nanking by aeroplane.

August 10. The "North-China Daily News" announces that General Chiang Kai-shek, as the result of Sir Miles Lampson's representations, has, in the most emphatic language, ordered a new enquiry.

August 12. General Chen Yih arrives at Soochow to conduct a new enquiry, which is expected to be completed in less than a fortnight.

August 14. Reported by Reuter from Nanking that General Chen Yih's enquiry will throw no further light on the case.

August 18. "North-China Daily News" receives semi-official reports from Nanking to the effect that the enquiry is not completed.

August 19. "North-China Daily News" receives news that General Chen Yih has returned to Soochow to follow up a new clue.

August 19. "North-China Daily News" announces the receipt of reports from Nanking to the effect that General Chen Yih had returned from Soochow and was preparing his report.

September 7. "North-China Daily News" records a statement from Chinese sources to the effect that the enquiry would be speeded up and that General Chiang Kai-shek was alive to the importance of an early announcement.

October 14. Sir Miles Lampson arrives in Nanking by air.

October 20. "North-China Daily News" points out the necessity to remove resentment caused by delay in the Chinese Government's handling of the Thorburn case.

J.H.P.

Registry

Attach to Thorburn file

H.K. 28/10

# THE THORBURN CASE AFTER 141 DAYS

By R. G. W. WOODWARD, C.R.

S. D. REGISTRY  
No. S. D. 2464/H.  
21.10.31.

THE British Minister is once more in Nanking. And though it seems probable that the immediate object of his visit is to keep in touch with the Chinese Government during the Sino-Japanese crisis, it is to be hoped that he will also have instructions to press for a report upon the Thorburn case.

It is now 141 days since the young Briton, John Hay Thorburn, disappeared. He was last seen in the hands of the Chinese military at Quinsan and Soochow, and the evidence that has since been obtained from various sources leaves little doubt that he was done to death by his captors.

A demand for an investigation was made by the British Authorities, as soon as what in their opinion, was conclusive

evidence that he had been arrested by the Chinese military had been obtained. And on July 18, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs transmitted to the British Minister a Report compiled by representatives of the Ministry of War and the Waichiaopu, which denied that the young Briton had ever been in the hands of the military, and quoted several of the witnesses who had been questioned by a British Consular Officer as saying exactly the opposite to what they told him.

## Local Indignation

NOT unnaturally this brazen attempt to evade the issue aroused intense indignation among the British communities in China. The China Association, British Patriotic Societies and individual Britons took up the matter, and

called strong protests to London, with the result that Sir Miles Lampson was instructed to proceed to Nanking as soon as possible, and to take up the matter in person with General Chiang Kai-shek.

The British Minister

66 A

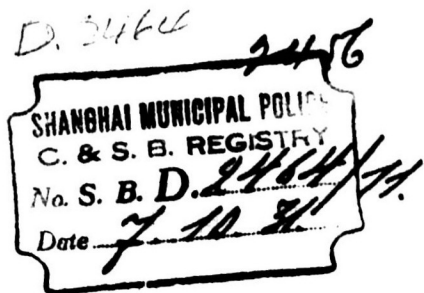


Admission 40 and

SETTING THE HEART



Reg.  
Reese file  
21.10.31.



THE NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1931

## CHINA QUESTIONS IN COMMONS

### Thorburn Case Produces Another Query

### NO CHANGE REPORT- ED ON EXTRALITY

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

London, Sept 15.

The following questions were asked in the House this week:

6. Mr. Wardlaw-Milne asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any further action has been taken by His Majesty's Minister in China in connection with the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn; and, if so, with what result?

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Captain Eden): His Majesty's Minister has not reported any action subsequent to that described in my reply to the hon. Member for Chester (Sir C. Cazyer) on Thursday last.

#### Extraterritoriality

7. Mr. Wardlaw-Milne asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the present position of the extraterritoriality negotiations being carried on with the Chinese Government?

Captain Eden: As stated in the answer returned in this House on June 17 last, the negotiations have reached a stage which enables them to be reported to their respective Governments. Owing to the political conditions in China, there has been no change in the position since that date.

Mr. Wardlaw-Milne: Are we to understand that negotiations have, in fact, been interrupted and no date has been fixed for their resumption? If not, is not that desirable in view of the Thorburn case and other cases of a similar kind, which appear to make it undesirable to go on with these negotiations?

Captain Eden: The position is that neither Government has yet completed its examination of the position reached in the negotiations.

File  
JH  
7.10.31

2372

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. D. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464/11.  
Date 17.9.31

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1931.

**REPORT EXPECTED AT  
END OF MONTH**

LONDON, Sept. 14.—Referring to a question in connection with the Thorburn case in the House of Commons to-day, Captain R. A. Eden, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated that nothing the British nor the Chinese Government had formulated their examination of the position reached in the negotiations.

He added that the Minister to China had not reported any action subsequent to that described in the statement he made last Thursday, when he informed the House that the inquiry had not been completed, adding the Chinese Government had reported it was progressing satisfactorily and that its report could be expected before the end of the current month.

Sir Miles Lampson, he continued, had pressed the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs for the report at the earliest possible moment and made known his disappointment at the delay of the Chinese authorities in furnishing it.

John Thorburn, a 19-year-old resident of Shanghai, disappeared on June 2 and has not since been heard of.—Reuter.

*Registry  
attach to file  
NR 17/9*

5

*Registry*

*E. 2461*

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT  
C. & S. D. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. *2464/1*

September 2, 1931.

Morning Translation

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**THINK ABOUT THE THORNBURN CASE**

The Shanghai Nippon publishes the following report:-

Beochow, August 31.

*Attach to file.*

According to a reliable source, the following truthful statement regarding the Thornburn case has been received. At midnight on June 1, two Chinese gendarmes, who were on sentry duty in the vicinity of Tsing Kyi Railway station guarding the line, observed a suspicious looking European whom they questioned. Thornburn shot both these gendarmes and made good his escape under cover of the darkness. A thorough search for the culprit was instituted by the Chinese authorities. Mr. Thornburn was arrested and taken to the gendarmerie headquarters of the First Corps at Beochow. The gendarmerie authorities suspected Thornburn to be a communist attempting to damage the railway line as he had left near the track certain instruments such as monkey wrench, screw drivers etc. Judging from the prisoners clothing and language it was apparent that he was an Englishman, but they tried to force Mr. Thornburn to admit that he was a communist, finally torturing him by stringing him up because he refused to admit the allegation. Mr. Thornburn fainted due to loss of blood from injuries. The following day the Chief of the Gendarmerie Corps who was absent returned to headquarters and was informed regarding Thornburn case. He scolded the officers who conducted the case, but Mr. Thornburn ~~was~~ *was* afterward shot and incinerated in order to destroy all proof because the gendarmes authorities feared serious trouble would arise should Thornburn be set free. The gendarmerie authorities also ordered all the Chinese newspaper men not to publish a word about the matter and forced some of them who had already published certain parts of the incident to contradict their statements. However there was a certain newspaper reporter who witnessed Thornburn being tortured. He can not divulge the particulars because of the existing relations between Britain and China. It is expected however that the persons responsible for Thornburn's death will be punished in accordance with law. It is also reported that Mr. Chen Yi, who was commissioned to investigate the matter, submitted his report to General Chiang giving the true fact of the case and has asked instruction how to deal with the matter in a proper manner.

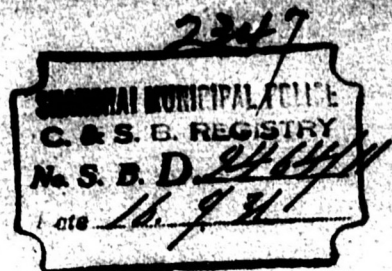
**KOREAN SENTENCED**

The Shanghai Nichi-Nichi publishes the following report:-

A Korean named Kim De Man, aged 27, residing at No. 25 East Jukong Road, Chapel, was arrested by the Japanese Consular authorities on September 1, for violating the deportation order of the Japanese Consular Police and conducting a brothel. He was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment at the Japanese Police Court.

**JAPANESE SENTENCED**





THE NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1931

### NOTES & COMMENTS

#### The Thorburn Case

The statement that the Chinese Government expect to be able to issue a "satisfactory" report on the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn and to submit it to Sir Miles Lampson before the end of the current month, is elicited from the new Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons. It shows that the process of speeding up the report of General Chen Yih has not been as effective as was recently suggested from Nanking. It means, presumably that, in the course of the next fortnight the document will be available for the British Government. Of its character it is impossible to say anything in advance at this stage. There was, it will be remembered, an apparently authoritative suggestion that it left matters where they were. This was, however, promptly denied by other equally authoritative statements, which went so far as to hint that material evidence of value had been obtained, leading to General Chen Yih's second visit to Soochow. It seems to be essential that, after this long delay, some substantial result should accrue in response to the British Government's urgent inquiries. The matter may be left there for the moment.

J. H.

Registry  
Attach to file  
NR. 1519

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1931

**QUESTIONS ASKED ON  
THORBURN CASE****Briton's Disappearance  
Remains Unexplained  
By Chinese****VEXATIOUS DELAY IN  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

LONDON, Sept. 10.—The question of the disappearance of John Thorburn was again raised in the House of Commons to-day by Sir Charles Gayser, Conservative member for the City of Chester, who asked whether the additional inquiry ordered by General Chiang Kai-shek had brought to light any fresh information as to the fate or whereabouts of the missing Englishman.

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Captain R. A. Eden, replied that the inquiry had not yet been completed. The Chinese Government had reported that it was progressing satisfactorily and that its report could be expected before the end of the current month.

Sir Miles Lampson, he continued, had pressed the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs for the report at the earliest moment and had made known his disappointment at the delay of the Chinese authorities in furnishing it.—Reuter.

*Jan?*

Form No. 2  
11,500-1-31

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE



SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date Sept 5 Station 2464  
Date September 5, 1931

Subject (in full) The Thorburn Case.

Made by J.D.S. Unemoto.

Forwarded by S.B. Lu

With reference to the attached translation from the Shanghai Nippo of September 2, 1931 regarding the Thorburn Case, Mr. Akahoshi, editor of the Shanghai Nippo, was visited with the object of confirming the report published in the paper.

The editor stated as follows:-

"The report was a copy of a report made by a certain government official, therefore, he believes it to be a correct one regarding the Thorburn Case."

He declined to disclose the name of this official or discuss the matter.

J.D.S. Unemoto  
J. D. S.

officer i/c Special Branch.

D. C. Brime

The report published in the Shanghai Nippo re Thorburn seems to me to be an exaggerated account of what was published in the North China Daily news.

NR. 5/9.

Regy. file  
NR. 5/9

NR. 5/9



**Memorandum.**

POLICE FORCE,  
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL,

Shanghai, 3/9 193  
To S. I. (Capt. Nakagawa or J. S. Umemoto)

For inquiry and report  
as to the source of the  
information contained  
in the attached and  
the truth of it.

A.K. 3/9

J. S. Umemoto.

Repa & pleam.

SOR  
3/9.

Extract from the Morning Translation of

TRUTH ABOUT THE THORBURN CASE

The Shanghai Nippo publishes  
the following report :-

Soochow, August 31.

According to a reliable source, the following truthful statement regarding the Thorburn case has been received. At midnight on June 1, two Chinese gendarmes, who were on sentry duty in the vicinity of Tsing Nyi Railway station guarding the line, observed a suspicious looking European whom they questioned. Thorburn shot both these gendarmes and made good his escape under cover of the darkness. A thorough search for the culprit was instituted by the Chinese authorities. Mr. Thorburn was arrested and taken to the gendarmerie headquarters of the First Corps at Soochow. The gendarmerie authorities suspected Thorburn to be a communist attempting to damage the railway line as he had left near the track certain instruments such as monkey wrench, screw drivers etc. Judging from the prisoners clothing and language it was apparent that he was an Englishman, but they tried to force Mr. Thorburn to admit that he was a communist, finally torturing him by stringing him up because he refused to admit the allegation. Mr. Thorburn fainted due to loss of blood from injuries. The following day the Chief of the Gendarmerie Corps who was absent returned to headquarters and was informed regarding Thorburn case. He scolded the officers who conducted the case. Thorburn was afterward shot and incinerated in order to destroy all proof because the gendarmerie authorities feared serious trouble would arise should Thorburn be set free. The gendarmerie authorities also ordered all the Chinese newspaper men not to publish a word about the matter and forced some of them who had already published certain parts of the incident to contradict their statements. However there was a certain newspaper reporter who witnessed Thorburn being tortured. He can not divulge the particulars because of the existing relations between Britain and China. It is expected however that the persons responsible for Thorburn's death will be punished in accordance with law. It is also reported that Mr. Chen Nyi, who was commissioned to investigate the matter, submitted his report to General Chiang giving the true facts of the case and has asked instruction how to deal with the matter in a proper manner.

TRUTH ABOUT THE THORBURN CASE

The Shanghai Nippo publishes  
the following report :-

Soochow, August 31.

According to a reliable source, the following truthful statement regarding the Thorburn case has been received. At midnight on June 1, two Chinese gendarmes, who were on sentry duty in the vicinity of Tsing Nyl Railway station guarding the line, observed a suspicious looking European whom they questioned. Thorburn shot both these gendarmes and made good his escape under cover of the darkness. A thorough search for the culprit was instituted by the Chinese authorities. Mr. Thorburn was arrested and taken to the gendarmerie headquarters of the First Corps at Soochow. The gendarmerie authorities suspected Thorburn to be a communist attempting to damage the railway line as he had left near the track certain instruments such as monkey wrench, screw drivers etc. Judging from the prisoners clothing and language it was apparent that he was an Englishman, but they tried to force Mr. Thorburn to admit that he was a communist, finally torturing him by stringing him up because he refused to admit the allegation. Mr. Thorburn fainted due to loss of blood from injuries. The following day the Chief of the Gendarmerie Corps who was absent returned to headquarters and was informed regarding Thorburn case. He scolded the officers who conducted the case. Thorburn was afterward shot and incinerated in order to destroy all proof because the gendarmerie authorities feared serious trouble would arise should Thorburn be set free. The gendarmerie authorities also ordered all the Chinese newspaper men not to publish a word about the matter and forced some of them who had already published certain parts of the incident to contradict their statements. However there was a certain newspaper reporter who witnessed Thorburn being tortured. He can not divulge the particulars because of the existing relations between Britain and China. It is expected however that the persons responsible for Thorburn's death will be punished in accordance with law. It is also reported that Mr. Chen Nyl, who was commissioned to investigate the matter, submitted his report to General Chiang giving the true facts of the case and has asked instruction how to deal with the matter in a proper manner.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. L. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 19.8.31

August 19, 1931.

Afternoon Transmission

**MURKIN-AMERICA**

**THE THURGOOD CASE.**

The Shen Pao publishes the following telegram from Washington:-

In connection with Thurgood's disappearance, the British authorities have sent a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the result of their findings:-

- (1) A member of the Chinese Military Police, Sergeant Sui, states that on June 2 he saw a foreigner arrested after a shooting affray with a foreign youth near Chingpu.
- (2) A certain woman of Chingpu described the arrest of a foreign youth whose features resemble those of Thurgood whose photo was shown to her by the British investigator.
- (3) A railway policeman at Chingpu Station declared that in the afternoon of June 2 he saw a foreigner travelling to Soochow by train. Another policeman stated that the said foreigner declared himself to be a British subject.

In addition to the foregoing, there are other proofs such as removal of his nose, ears, etc., having been cut off.

On the day in question at Chingpu, 20 miles distant from Shanghai, two Chinese Military Police were engaged in a gun fight with a foreigner, resulting in the death and wounding of both Chinese soldiers and the subsequent arrest of the foreigner.

*Extract for  
file  
19/8*

*W.R.*

D. 2464

Extract for  
file. 8.8.31  
HR

**INTERNAL SECURITY**

The Union Government has published the following  
telegram from Moscow:-

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in receipt  
of a report from the Soviet Consulate stating that the

August 2, 1952.

Mounting Investigation

**REDACTED**

Good body of the man as British citizens around the man  
has been found in London, but the case of his death is  
not known.

7  
E. 2461

August 9, 1934.

Hankow Translation

**BLACK-STAR**

**THE THORNTON CASE A MATTER OF DISCREPANCY**

**The China Times reports:-**

In connection with the disappearance of a British subject named Thornton and the publication of yesterday's Hankow telegram to the effect that Thornton's dead body had been found in Hoochow, a copy of the Far Eastern News agency yesterday called on Mr. Yang Hsueh Tze, Chief of the Shanghai office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, enquiring the truth of the report. In reply Mr. Yang solemnly declared that the news was entirely groundless. He has also requested Mr. C. V. Wang, Minister for Foreign Affairs, to send a wire to the Hankow Ministry directing it to ascertain the source of this telegram.

The China Times publishes the following letter from the Shanghai office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:-

We were greatly surprised to read a telegram from Hankow published in your paper of August 8 that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in receipt of a report from its Shanghai office to the effect that the dead body of a missing British subject named Thornton had been found in Hoochow. In this connection, we have to state that this office has received no news regarding this case nor has it forwarded any report to the Ministry. We therefore request you to publish a correction in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Extract for  
line

SEARCHED INDEXED  
C. & S. L. RECORD  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 1.8.39

**MR. HENDERSON'S CASE - INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTION.**

The China Times publishes the following telegram from Shanghai:-

Information received from the British Consulate states that a verbal protest over the Henderson case has been lodged by the British Minister to China with Mr. So. T. Wang, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who replied that the Chinese authorities would be instructed to conduct a thorough investigation into the case.

*Extract for  
file*

*MR.  
18.39.*



SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. REGISTRY

No. S. D. D. 2484

Date 30. 7. 31

### RECEIVED

The Shanghai Municipal Police and Municipality  
publishes the following advertisement in the Sin Sun  
1931-

This paper hereby offers a reward of \$1000  
for information which on reliable grounds that will lead  
to the whereabouts of John Thornton, (dead or alive), an  
English youth, aged 18, who has been missing since June 1.  
The paper will keep the name of informant secret and  
confidential.

The Sin Sun publishes the following  
correspondence written by "Living Sun" ( )

John Thornton, an Englishman, has been  
missing since June 1 and as for his whereabouts are  
unknown. The English community suspects that he has  
been tortured and put to death by Chinese soldiers for  
having killed Chinese soldiers near the "Sun Lung"  
Railway Station owing to his refusal to be subjected  
to a search. The English residents in Shanghai are  
not content with the British Minister to China who is  
conducting the case and are planning to send a telegram  
to their home government requesting that strong negotiations  
be opened with China insisting that China is a sovereign  
nation and demanding that negotiations on the violation  
of extrajurisdictionality should be immediately stopped.

Extract for  
file

u.c.

**THE CHINA TIMES PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING**

report on July 29th.

The whereabouts of Hsuehmen, an English youth, as far as 1929 and been located since he was missing on the night of May 24.

Information from foreign sources states that he was arrested at quinquet and removed to Peking in connection with the shooting of Military Police at the waiting railway station.

There receipt of a letter from Sir Allen Lumsden, the British Minister to China, and the British Consul in Hankow, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of War jointly detailed officials to conduct careful investigations regarding the case of quinquet and Hsuehmen and were also sent a reply on the results of their enquiries to the British Minister and Consul. These investigations have now furnished the civil and military authorities of the Shanghai, Chinese and British Consular Departments to locate the whereabouts of the missing Hsuehmen.

*extract for file.*

*n.h.*

The China Times published the following comment on July 29th.

For the past month reports on Hsuehmen case have been published in local Chinese and foreign newspapers.

Hsuehmen, an English boy of 19 years old, was constitutionally left hand and did not speak. Consequently a case of shooting of Military Police took place and, according to press reports, the culprit was a Russian man, it was also reported, had been executed.

Consequently, foreign newspapers concluded that the culprit was Hsuehmen. Hsuehmen's family then approached the British Minister to China for assistance. The latter detailed officials to conduct investigations and also requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ask the Ministry of War to ask likewise.

According to today's report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its reply stated that as a result of investigations made jointly by the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and War, no development by the name of Hsuehmen has been arrested by members of the Chinese Army.

It is still a matter of doubt whether on the day in question Hsuehmen was one of the culprits of the shooting of the Military Police. Of course the fact that Hsuehmen was arrested cannot be definitely proved. The matter is only hanging. However, the Shanghai Evening News and Agency of today's date publishes a statement to the effect that Hsuehmen was really arrested by Chinese soldiers and that the reply of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is completely correct in stating the fact that the matter was completely solved. This statement may reflect the nature of the condition of Hsuehmen's family.

*extract for file*

*n.h.*

I (the writer) do not know whether Mr. Westhead connected with the case at the trial of the Russian soldier previous to writing his comment on the Shanghai News. However the point in question also decided the guilt of the Russian soldier. It was very clear by then the accused had been convicted.

**THE SHANGHAI POLICE AS CONCERNED WITH THE RECENT INCIDENT.**

The China Press publishes the following article:-

At the present time when the Chinese are republishing history and when Japan is acting aggressively against China, suddenly another unfortunate incident happens, namely the disappearance of Thornton. Thornton is a British resident of Shanghai aged 40. He is missing and as far has not been located. Many Britishers suspect he was murdered and put to death by Chinese soldiers and consequently are demanding that their Minister to China lodge a protest with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Government requesting a thorough investigation into the affair.

This incident has been seldom mentioned in the Chinese press and as our readers know little of the investigation conducted by the Britishers over it, and perhaps may have not yet heard of the case. The one thing that, while no proof of Thornton's death is yet to hand, the Britishers have unanimously agreed to admit in this case is such a matter that they intend to satisfy themselves that China is to be blamed. Their indignation is really aroused being greater than is our attitude towards the massacre of hundreds of Chinese residents who were murdered by Europeans in Japan.

I do not know where Thornton is at present, whether he is alive or dead, but according to reports published by the local foreign newspapers during the last few days it is evident that he is dead and that he died at the hands of Chinese. A certain foreign paper published a large advertisement claiming a reward of \$1,000 for information leading to his whereabouts. Other foreign papers are daily publishing correspondence from readers previously asking their government to open strong negotiations with the National Government. Yesterday the British consular force formed a committee which is prepared to support the action of their government, and at the same time a letter appeared in a certain paper stating that the British Government should immediately move an ultimatum on the Chinese Government demanding the latter to hand over Thornton within 48 hours, otherwise troops would be dispatched to the Chinese Islands and these latter seized.

*Extract for file*

7611

July 24, 1932.

Afternoon Translation

**MINUTE**

The foregoing considerations show how the life of a foreigner is valued as compared with that of Chinese. When a foreigner disappears in China, there are certain people who advocate war before it has even been ascertained whether he is still alive or dead. On the other hand, when Chinese are actually killed and shot by foreigners and definite proofs are abundant, the foreigners treat such an event as a matter of no consequence.

There is justice and there is international morality. Only one difference exists in this world namely the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor. There is no such thing as courage, faith, shame, honor, etc., etc. If on there is talk of rights, one must first of all possess sufficient power to support the talk.

At the present moment, when the Sino-Japanese negotiations are hovering around, the case of Thornton's disappearance serves us with a good example with which to judge others. It is still a matter of doubt whether Thornton is dead or alive. Supposing him to be dead, then his life cannot be considered of more value than that of the general hundreds of Chinese massacred in Korea regarding which there is abundant proof. Substituting this, the indignation of Chinese is not to be compared with that displayed by the Britons over Thornton's disappearance. Why is it that the life of Chinese is held so lightly?

*As above*

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY  
 C. & S. D. RECORDS  
 No. S. B. D. 8464  
 Date 30 7 31

**MEMORANDUM**

The Chinese Times publishes the following

extract:-  
 It is stated a matter of doubt whether the  
 British people, however, in doing so, they are  
 responsible. It is the duty of the government in  
 the Chinese government, and in the maintenance  
 of Chinese, and the people of all nations to  
 know the government and find the subject of interest  
 to really know.

Such knowledge is necessary for the common  
 and regular in business. However, the Chinese  
 residents in Shanghai regard this as almost completely  
 as a serious international problem. Different treaties  
 are provided, all of which are inspired with the feeling  
 the thing on the Chinese government. In reality, it  
 is almost to place any thing before responsibility  
 been found. The government of the Shanghai  
 commission in that this incident serves to demonstrate  
 that international relations must not be neglected.  
 The matter of creating a good deal of them over this  
 trifling incident is hardly worth. The most direct  
 proposal advanced is that of strengthening measures to  
 reduce the Chinese interests and individuals living at  
 the common policy. Since the Shanghai no more  
 Shanghai the government they demand from the Great  
 Shanghai they and will it really take this day to start  
 action now. Their attitude proves that Chinese  
 feelings are still too closely allied to the local conditions.

*Extract for file*

*MR.*

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. D. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 30. 7. 21.

#### THE THORNBURN CASE.

*Extract for file*

The Chinatimes publishes the following report:-  
With reference to the disappearance of the  
British subject, Thornburn, the Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs had given its reply to the British Consul on  
the result of investigations jointly conducted by  
officials commissioned by the Ministries of Foreign  
Affairs and War. The reply stated "no foreigner was  
ever arrested or detained by Chinese soldiers."

*W.R.*

The local British residents are making a  
great deal of this little incident and are using it as  
a plea to retain the existence of extraterritoriality.  
Mr. Emsw, manager of the "Ai Er Teh" Company,  
proposed to dispatch a telegram informing the London  
press of a petition signed by local British residents  
regarding the Thornburn case. The Shanghai Branch

July 28, 1931.

Mourning Foundation

**REMARKS****THE THURMAN INCIDENT - A SUMMARY.**

The China Times publishes the following article:-

In connection with Thurman's disappearance, a letter written by a Chinese Mr. Chen appeared in a certain foreign evening newspaper on July 28 citing an incident which affected two Chinese in Australia some years ago.

The following is the gist of the letter:- "Two Chinese, brothers, named Ah Yung and Ah Sun respectively, returned to Australia from China where they had been attending school. Although they were born in Australia, they were refused entry by the Australian authorities who were not anxious at that time to have any more Chinese in Australia. In spite of their being in possession of birth certificates and passports, both brothers were forcibly detained and thrown in a deep prison at Port Phillip.

They were subsequently released pending the decision of the High Court of Australia, but immediately they regained their freedom, they were again arrested by British troops and removed to another place. While passing a bush, they unobtrusively crossed the cover of the British soldiers and were driven into the bush where Ah Yung died from the intense heat.

Ah Sun survived. Fortunately some days later he managed to effect his escape. He then reported the affair to the various Chinese consular organizations who joined a hue and cry which continued for several months, but the Australian Government made no reply on the plea of lack of evidence. Finally the Australian authorities formally tendered an apology to the Chinese Government with advice to "forget it". This unfortunate affair was ultimately dropped.

"Death is terrible to both Chinese and foreigners. Supposing Thurman were actually killed by the Chinese, is it not a similar case to that of Ah Yung? If for that is fairly therefore the Britishers had better "forget it".

If the Britishers would not only think the matter over after reading Mr. Chen's letter, the Thurman case would soon collapse. I wish, however, to inform Mr. Chen that the life of a foreigner is considered to be of more value than that of Chinese. Several decades ago, in the year 1890 of the T'ung Dynasty, the making of a Japanese legation compound resulted in war started by a killed servant. There are always old examples to quote for foreigners when Chinese are affected, but Chinese dispose of matters generally.

At the present time when China is still sound asleep, Mr. Chen's letter will have no effect.

Extract for  
file

7.28.

SHANGHAI CUSTOMS  
C. & S. B. REGISTR.  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 29.7.31

**SIR MILNE LAMONT, B. BARON, K. C. S. G. (HONORARY MEMBER)**

The following report appears in the China Times and other local newspapers:

Consistent with the receipt of instructions from the British Government, Sir Milne Lamont, the British Minister to China, who is spending his summer vacation at Peking, will come to Shanghai to put the Shanghai Government to rights in connection with the latter's administration.

The local British Consulate-General has reported a wire from Sir Milne Lamont at Peking stating that he will arrive at Shanghai on Friday the 1st inst.

Extract for  
file  
29.7.31.



S. B. Regy

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL  
C. & S. D. REG. NO. Y 2464  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 14. 8. 31

August 24, 1931.

Afternoon Edition.

**RECEIVED**

**THE SHANGHAI NIGHT-WATCH**

The Shanghai Night-Watch publishes the following report:-

On August 22, the Shanghai Night-Watch received an anonymous letter from a certain Chinese attorney and thinking the publication of the Shanghai Municipal Council for having looked over Mr. and Mrs. Huxford on August 22 to the Chinese authorities and being quite certain of their nationality. The anonymous author then stated that confidential informants employed by the Night-Watch were to ascertain on the grounds that the Chinese authorities are corrupt and China's laws are unworkable. The letter also stated the Chinese authorities of authority by pointing out, as an example, the Huxford's case, as follows:-

- at Canton on June 20 and immediately landed after
- to Hong Kong on the 21st. (This case is practically
- settled. Chief of the First Customs Corps at
- Shanghai, Mr. Wang, immediately communicated
- with Mr. Ho Tung Lee, the Chinese
- Commissioner of Customs regarding instructions
- how to deal with Huxford. About two weeks
- later the Chinese Commissioner of Customs issued
- the order to arrest Huxford. Subsequently Huxford
- was arrested at the Chinese Customs Headquarters.
- The assistant the found the living dead at the
- execution was he easily identified. Huxford's
- body was burnt together with his clothing thus
- leaving absolutely no trace of him. The
- information reported the other day by a Chinese
- newspaper to the effect that Huxford's head was
- discovered in Canton is sheer nonsense. Huxford
- will never be found. I (the writer of the letter)
- have further details regarding Huxford's
- murder. The public may doubt my information
- because I sent my letter without signing my name
- but I thought it wiser to publish my name at present
- however I do not mind to lose my life for disclosing
- a great mystery of the Chinese Government. However
- I will stand before the public and give evidence
- when it is required. I also declare that the
- conspiracy of Mr. and Mrs. Huxford to the Chinese
- authorities by the Shanghai Municipal Council is
- not compatible with the sense of humanity and
- justice."

At present, it is impossible to identify the writer of this letter, however, it appears that all his information is based at least on some degree of truth.

It is presumed that the day is fast approaching when all the truth regarding the Huxford case will be brought into the limelight exposing the heinous action of the Chinese authorities.

Extract for  
Thorburn  
file

M.R.



2744  
 & S. B. D. 2464/11  
 No. S. B. D. 2464/11  
 Date 22.8.34

THE SHANGHAI TIMES THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1934

**Notes Sent to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, Re: Thorburn Case**

A British spy, who was arrested at Quinsan, 30 miles from Shanghai, on June 2, 1934, was identified as a foreigner by a Chinese woman, who was arrested at the same time, and by a railway policeman at Quinsan station.

1. A member of the Chinese military police, who was arrested at Quinsan, stated that on June 2, 1934, he saw a foreigner travelling to Soochow by train, while another policeman stated that the said foreigner declared himself to be a British subject.
2. A certain woman of Quinsan described the arrest of a foreigner, whose photo was shown to her by the British investigator (Mr. A. L. Scott).
3. A railway policeman at Quinsan station declared that in the afternoon of June 2 he saw a foreigner travelling to Soochow by train, while another policeman stated that the said foreigner declared himself to be a British subject.

On the day in question at Quinsan, 30 miles from Shanghai, two Chinese military police were engaged in a gun-fight with a foreigner, resulting in the death and wounding of both Chinese soldiers and the subsequent arrest of the foreigner.

Locally, no information of any sort is obtainable from the British consular authorities upon the Thorburn case, instructions having been issued by the Consul-General that no statement of any sort is to be made to the Press.

See  
 Please file  
 WLS



2/21  
SHANGHAI PUBLIC  
C. & S. REG. ST.  
No. S. B. D. 246411  
Date 20 8 31

THE NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 1931

**INQUIRY  
RESUMED**  
**General Chen Yin Sheng  
in Peking**

Information from Chinese sources reveals that General Chen Yin Sheng who is stated to have accepted a new line in regard to the disappearance of Mr. Thorburn.

This move may be looked upon as the latest outcome of the events to which the "North-China Daily News" yesterday referred. It happens that the report which General Chen is preparing is not yet complete and possibly interesting developments may be expected.

Reg.  
Please file  
19:8:31

# ENGLISH PROMISES ON THORBURN

## Promises Given To Thorburn Case In London

LONDON, July 28.—Mr. Miles Lampson, the British Minister in China, has been instructed to tell Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, the head of the Chinese Government, that the British Government would not allow a man of Mr. Thorburn's rank to be treated as a common criminal. It was also stated that the British Government would not allow a man of Mr. Thorburn's rank to be treated as a common criminal.

All announcements to this effect were made in Parliament yesterday and Mr. Thompson, the Foreign Secretary of the House of Commons, said that the British Government would not allow a man of Mr. Thorburn's rank to be treated as a common criminal.

Dr. Dalton said: "The House of the Chinese Government is clearly aware that all men of Mr. Thorburn's rank should be treated as such. Knowledge of any foreigner having been arrested."

"Mr. Miles Lampson has therefore been instructed to make representations to the Chinese Government in the following sense:—

### Government's Duty

"Independent inquiries have established beyond all reasonable doubt that Mr. Thorburn, who is under suspicion in some quarters of having shot at and fatally wounded two Chinese guardsmen, was arrested and handed over to the custody of military authorities, who have found means to silence the witnesses possessing knowledge of the facts.

"It is the duty of the Chinese Government in the first place to discover Mr. Thorburn's whereabouts and hand him over to the British authorities in China if he is still alive; and in the second place to inflict suitable punishment on any military authority who may have been responsible for maltreating him or causing his death.

"His Majesty's Government therefore most earnestly and strongly urge the Chinese Government with all expedition to find means of persuading the military authorities concerned in the present case of the urgent necessity of enabling the Chinese Government to carry out the ordinary obligations of a civilized State."

"Sir Miles Lampson has been instructed to convey the foregoing as a special message from His Majesty's Government to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, the President of the National Government, adding that he has instructions to settle the question with the highest authority, since his Majesty's Government must insist on proper protection being afforded to British subjects."

THE END

19. 8. 31.

### Further Information Compels More Investigations

### FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

London, Aug. 17.

Inquiry at the Foreign Office here reveals the fact that the official report of the second inquiry into the disappearance of Mr. John Hay Thurston has not yet been received. The results of the investigation made by the Chinese Minister of War, General Chen Yi, has not been forwarded by Sir Miles Lampson, H.M. Minister. While that time has no official knowledge of the substance of General Chen Yi's findings, which were reported in the Press, to corroborate with the findings of the first commission of inquiry, denying that any foreigner at all was involved in the shooting incident, which, it is alleged, was the reason advanced for the arrest of the young Briton.

Semi-official reports from Chinese Government sources state that the inquiry of General Chen Xih into the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn is not complete. It is believed that further information has been received necessitating inquiries which are now being made. The report is therefore not yet finally drafted for submission to the Foreign Ministry.

It will be recalled that, on Saturday, a Renter message from Nanking stated that the report which was "nearly completed" threw no further light on the case and reiterated the statement that no foreigner had been arrested. On this message the "North-China Daily News" pointed out the serious implications of the adoption by the Chinese Government of so fantastic a report.

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Reg.  
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16:8:51



2086

## RESULT OF THORBURN SECOND INQUIRY

Vice-Minister Of War  
Ends Mission With-  
out Result

The second Chinese official investigation of the Thorburn mystery has been completed, according to a Chinese report received in Shanghai from Peking yesterday, which states that General Cheng Yih, Vice-Minister of War, has completed his inquiries at Quinsan and Soochow and returned to the capital to render his report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

General Cheng is alleged to have told press representatives at Peking that he commenced his investigation by questioning numerous railway guards along the line from Nanking to Quinsan, all of whom denied knowledge of the missing British youth.

Some of them admitted knowledge of the skirmish between railway guards and a gang of bandits wherein two guards were killed. But they denied any knowledge of a Russian or foreigner being involved in that affair.

While in Soochow, General Cheng interrogated military and civil officials, but without discovering any information which might throw light on the mystery.

In Soochow he learned from the military authorities that on the morning of June 2 a gang of railway bandits was active in the vicinity of Quinsan and that instructions were issued to the railway guards to exercise extra precautions.

The guards eventually came into conflict with a gang and sustained casualties after being ambushed.

A report of this incident appearing in the Chinese press of Shanghai implicated a Russian in the shooting, but investigation of this failed to connect Thorburn with the affair in any way.

*RE*

*See*

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15:8:31

*D.B. (Brune)*  
*Information*  
*J.H. Evans*

14:8:31

By WAS. F. BULLARD

glanced away, only to glance back. For-  
 eign eyes that the  
 calm eye of the  
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 little longer, a little  
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baggar was surprised and  
the baggar's habits  
were changed. The baggar  
was very original.

[illegible]

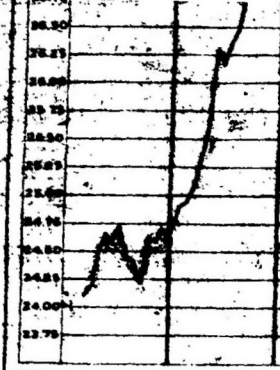
Colonel W. H. E. Tamm, D.S.O., and Mr. W. H. E. Tamm of the Atlantic Petroleum Corporation, which is supplying the fuel for the flight, were on hand to greet Mr. Overmaster when his plane landed.

between England and New Zealand and has done much to popularize aviation in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Onizuker by both the Annals  
and the Royal Air Force Association  
Survey today.

# President Grant Sails For America With Passenger, Mail

Commander J. C. Doherty, United States Army, and Mr. Samuel Post, Director of the American and British Forces in Germany, were present. The ceremony was held in the presence of the American and British Forces in Germany.



The A.O.P.C. Average has been determined to be of use as an economic index so that it may have value to people who are particularly close followers of the Chemical Stock Market. There has been taken into account the "Average" too speculative too sensitive to extraordinary conditions that have no economic basis. The representative factor is most strongly emphasized, a factor that is in the A.O.P.C. Average reflect a wide range of chemical business and industry activity.

The economic isolation  
of China is strongly brought  
to the fore. The "Average" Pri  
the end of February to the mid  
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THE NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 1931

## NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE THORBURN CASE

Gen. Chiang Kai-shek Orders Another  
and Thorough Investigation

### INSTRUCTIONS FROM NANCHANG

Searching Inquiry Ordered Into Mystery  
of Missing British Youth

THE "North-China Daily News" is reliably informed, on advices received late last night from Nanking, that President Chiang Kai-shek has issued orders from Nanchang for another and thorough investigation into the circumstances of the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn, in the light of the further representations made to the Chinese Government by Sir Miles Lampson at Nanking.

It is understood that the President's orders are of the most definite kind and call firmly for a most searching investigation. This is the outcome of the personal efforts which Sir Miles Lampson has been making since his arrival at Nanking by air from Peitaiho on July 28.

There have been conversations between Sir Miles and Dr. C. T. Wang who have discussed the matter at great length. Some difficulty was created by the absence of General Chiang Kai-shek in Kiangsi, where he has been engaged in personally directing the campaign against the rebel Communist armies. General Chiang Kai-shek was, however, apprised at Nanchang of the British Government's views on the reply sent by the Chinese Government on July 16 to the representations made in June by the British Minister on the subject of Mr. Thorburn's whereabouts.

It will be recalled that Mr. Henderson on July 27 instructed Sir Miles Lampson to point out that an independent inquiry had established beyond reasonable

doubt that Mr. Thorburn, who was under suspicion in some quarters of having shot and fatally wounded two Chinese gendarmes, had been arrested and handed over to Chinese military authority, who had found means to silence witnesses with a knowledge of the facts. It was therefore the first duty of the Chinese Government firstly to discover Mr. Thorburn's whereabouts and to hand him over to the British authorities if he was still alive, and secondly suitably to punish any military authorities responsible for maltreating him or causing his death.

The instructions ended with a strong request to the Chinese Government "with all expedition to find means of persuading the military authorities concerned of the urgent necessity of enabling the Chinese Government to carry out the ordinary obligations of a civilised state."

These instructions have been in discussion between Sir Miles and Dr. C. T. Wang since July 28. Communication was established with General Chiang Kai-shek. The result is now seen in the order for the new and more thorough inquiry.

*See*

*Reg.  
Please file  
[Signature]*

8:8:31

2048

THE NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 1931

Another Thorburn Inquiry

The news that the President of the National Government has ordered another and most searching investigation into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn, shows that Sir Miles Lampson's presentation of the British Government's firm but friendly request to General Chiang Kai-shek has borne fruit. The Chinese Government have acted with prudent recognition of the justice of the contentions, put forward on the basis of the consular investigations, thus deciding to call for a further examination of the case. It is to be hoped that conditions will favour a prompt inquiry, for there seems, on the face of it, little reason for delay as the accumulation of material evidence has been steadily proceeding. No doubt, the British Government and the public behind them will recognise the correctness of the Chinese Government's response to Sir Miles Lampson's latest revelations. There will be every readiness to give the new investigators a fair field and to await their report accordingly.

*Red*

W

**Extract from the Morning Translation of  
August 8, 1931**

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**MISSING PERSONS**

The China Times published the following telegram from Hankow : -

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in receipt of a report from its Shanghai Office stating that the dead body of the missing English citizen named Thornton has been found in Soochow, but the cause of his death is not known.

# INQUIRY INTO THE KINSHEN CASE

General Chiang Kai-shek Orders Another  
and Thorough Investigation

INSTRUCTIONS FROM NANCHANG

Thorough Inquiry Ordered Into Mystery  
of Missing British Youth

The "North-China Daily News" is reliably informed, on advice received late last night from Nanking, that General Chiang Kai-shek has issued orders from Nanchang for another and thorough investigation into the circumstances of the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn. In the light of the representations made to the Chinese Government by Sir Miles Lambson at Nanking.

It is understood that the President's orders are of the most searching kind and call for a most searching investigation. The outcome of the personal appeal which Sir Miles Lambson has been making since his arrival at Nanking by air.

There have been considerable movements since last night. It is understood that the Chinese Government has been very much concerned by the disappearance of Mr. Thorburn. The difficulty was created by the absence of General Chiang Kai-shek in Kiangsu, where he has been engaged in personally leading the campaign against the Communist armies. General Chiang Kai-shek was, however, assisted at Nanchang by the British Government's representative, Sir Miles Lambson, who was with him on July 22. The Chinese Government had been in the process of making inquiries into the disappearance of Mr. Thorburn's whereabouts.

It was reported that Mr. Lambson on July 27 instructed Sir Miles Lambson to point out that an independent inquiry had established the ground responsible

doubt that Mr. Thorburn, who was under suspicion in some quarters of having shot and fatally wounded two Chinese gendarmes, had been arrested and handed over to a Chinese military authority, who had found means to silence witnesses with a knowledge of the facts. It was therefore the first duty of the Chinese Government firstly to discover Mr. Thorburn's whereabouts and to hand him over to the British authorities if he was still alive, and secondly suitably to punish any military authorities responsible for mistreating him or causing his death.

The instructions ended with a strong appeal to the Chinese Government with all expedition to find means of rescuing the military youth concerned of the urgent request, of enabling the Chinese Government to carry out the ordinary obligations of a civilized state.

These instructions have been in discussion between Sir Miles and Dr. C. T. Wang since July 22. Communication was established with General Chiang Kai-shek. The result is now seen in the order for the new and more thorough inquiry.

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SHANGHAI TIMES

C. & S. L. H.

No. 8. B. D.

AUGUST 1, 1937

3. 8. 31

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, SATURDAY

# Unjust To Blame China For Thorburn, Says Dr. Wang

Mr. Sheng, Foreign Office Man, Went To Soochow  
To Investigate, Reported Killed By Truck;  
Last Piece Of Evidence Obliterated

NANKING, July 31.—Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China, called on Dr. C. T. Wang, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on Wednesday afternoon in regard to the case of John Thorburn.

Sir Miles conveyed the British Government's strong protest, together with a request that the Chinese Government discover the whereabouts of John Thorburn and hand him over to the British authorities, if he is still alive, or, if he is dead, that suitable punishment should be meted out to the military authorities responsible.

## Dr. Wang's Attitude

It is understood that the attitude adopted by Dr. C. T. Wang is, briefly, as follows:

"Mr. Thorburn is a British subject living in a Foreign Concession—Shanghai. As far as the Chinese authorities are concerned his existence was unknown. When he left Shanghai for an unknown destination, he obtained no passport from the Chinese Government. It is, therefore, unjust to lay the entire blame of anything that may have happened to him on the Chinese Government."

It is announced that Mr. Sheng, the representative of the Foreign Office, who went to Soochow on Wednesday to investigate the case, was reported killed by a truck on the way back to Nanking. Some weeks ago, died on July 21 at the age of 40, of injuries received in a truck accident. He was a member of the Chinese Government. It is said that the Chinese Government might have been obtained from the only Chinese official who was in the truck at the time. No more available. —Reuter.

*Handwritten signature and date: 1/1/37*

*File 975*



## NO FURTHER LIGHT ON THORBURN CASE

### H. M.'s Minister's Move- ments At Nanking Undisclosed

No fresh light was thrown upon the Thorburn case yesterday, either by official or other sources.

The British Consul-General, Mr. J. F. Brennan, questioned with regard to a report allegedly emanating from Nanking wherein Dr. C. T. Wang, Nationalist Minister of Foreign Affairs, was credited with blaming Thorburn for entering Chinese territory without a "huchao" or native pass, declared that he had no statement to make.

According to this report, the Chinese authorities take the attitude that Thorburn ran unnecessary risk when he failed to provide himself with this document which, according to the Nationalist Minister, would have advised the Chinese authorities of his intention to pass through Chinese territory and gained for him a measure of protection.

The report concludes by saying that "the responsible authorities, not having been acquainted with Thorburn's intentions, could not possibly hold themselves responsible for his movements."

*W.P.*  
8/1/31

5

2017

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. D. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 7 8 31

The Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury, Friday, July 31, 1931

**Reward Of \$5,000**  
**In Thorburn Case**  
**Still Unclaimed**

Mr. John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton, has today been missing for 60 days. Where is he?

Is he still alive?

Is he dead and if so where is the body?

The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury reward of \$5,000 for conclusive proof of his whereabouts still is unclaimed though several individuals have attempted to solve the mystery. The reward still stands. All persons with the least information by the editor and the name or names of persons supplying the reward will be kept secret.

*File*  
*ms*

SHANGHAI 1937  
C. & S. REC.  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 7.8.37

THE CHINA PRESS FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1937

# Thorburn Without Huchao, Declares Foreign Ministry

## Waichiao Defends By Saying Journey Illegal

(Special To The China Press)  
NANKING, July 30.—Sir Miles Lampson, the British minister to China, had a lengthy conversation with Dr. C. T. Wang, minister of foreign affairs, yesterday (immediately upon his arrival by airplane from Foshan). Sir Miles, in the course of the conversation, is understood to have handed to Dr. Wang a memorandum on the Thorburn case.

Replying to the British minister's note today, the Foreign Ministry in a communication is said to have pointed out that according to the regular procedure, foreigners intending to travel in the interior of China must first obtain the necessary "huchao" so that the responsible authorities can notify beforehand the various local authorities through whose territory the traveler is expected to go in order that proper protection can be provided.

Mr. Thorburn, the ministry's reply is reported to have pointed out, failed to observe the required procedure. Moreover, the responsible authorities had not been acquainted with his intentions and therefore could not possibly hold themselves responsible for his movements.

### No Lampson Report (Reuter's Service)

LONDON, July 29.—Questioned in House of Commons today the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Hugh Dalton, said that in view of the interest, very rightly and naturally, taken in the Thorburn case, he was sure Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson, would give publicity to any communication received from Sir Miles Lampson, the British minister to China, during the Parliamentary recess.

Dr. Dalton added that no further reports had been expected from Sir Miles Lampson for some days in view of the fact that General Chiang Kai-shek was at present conducting military operations in Kiangsu.

*Jan 21/7/37*

*Regy.  
Passed to you  
MR. 3/8.*

*SI, Please pass W Reg  
Wfile.*

*31.7.37*

# Thorburn Publicly Is Promised By Dr. Dalton During Commons Recess

Under-Secretary Says He Feels Sure That Mr. Arthur Henderson Will Disclose Any Communication Received From Sir Miles Lampson

## SIX BRITISH SUBJECTS DIE WHILE IN CAPTIVITY DURING PAST 3 YEARS

LONDON, July 29.—Questioned in the House of Commons to-day, Dr. Hugh Dalton, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said that in view of the interest, very rightly and naturally, taken in the Thorburn case, he was sure Mr. Arthur Henderson, Foreign Secretary, would give publicity to any communication received from Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China, during the Parliamentary recess.

### BRITISH MINISTER SEES DR. WANG

Nature Of Conversation  
Unrevealed By Local  
Authorities

Although no official statement was made by local British consular authorities yesterday regarding movements of the British Minister to China, now in Nanking in connection with the Thorburn inquiry, it was learned that Sir Miles Lampson had already conferred with Dr. C. T. Wang, Nanking Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Sir Miles arrived at the capital by air from Peking in the early part of this week for the special purpose of pressing the Nanking Government for a further investigation of the Thorburn mystery which the press had publicized in Shanghai and Great Britain have demanded in emphatic terms.

Just after the arrival of Sir Miles, the British Minister in Nanking demanded of the Nanking Government, under the circumstances at present as no communication of any sort is being given out by local British officials, Mr. J. F. Kennedy, British Consul in Shanghai, said that he had nothing to say about Sir Miles' movements.

#### Two Months' Silence

It is exactly two months since John Thorburn (19), British youth, disappeared from his home in the French Concession, supposedly after setting out on foot in the direction of Nanking. The evidence of the disappearance is still in the hands of the Shanghai authorities.

It is learned that the Shanghai authorities have been unable to locate Thorburn since his disappearance. The Shanghai authorities have been unable to locate Thorburn since his disappearance. The Shanghai authorities have been unable to locate Thorburn since his disappearance.

Dr. Dalton added that no further progress had been expected from Sir Miles Lampson for some days in view of the fact that General Chiang Kai-shek was at present conducting military operations in Kiangsi.—Reuter.

#### Britain's Message

LONDON, July 29.—Dr. Hugh Dalton, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Commons to-day, said, "Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister, left Peking yesterday morning by aeroplane for Nanking with the object of delivering the message of the British Government personally to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek."

In the message which Sir Miles has been instructed to convey to the Chinese Government, the Government is urged with all the resources at its disposal to persuade the military authorities in Nanking to release Thorburn as a matter of the urgent necessity of carrying out the ordinary obligations of a civilized state.

In reply to another question, Dr. Dalton stated that six British subjects had died in captivity in China in the past three years.

—Reuter.

*Handwritten signature and date: 8/2/31*

## Wang At Nanking Seen By Lampson In Thorburn Case

British Minister Pays  
Visit To Foreign  
Affairs Chief

### CONSULATE HERE AWAITS MESSAGE

### Future Extradition Plans May Rest On Outcome Of Negotiations

Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China, made a formal call yesterday afternoon at the offices of Dr. G. T. Wang, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Nationalist Government, and the disappearance of young John Thorburn was discussed, according to a message received this morning from Nanking.

The exact nature of the discussion was not revealed. The conversation lasted for two full hours, it was stated, before Sir Miles and his Chinese secretary, Mr. Eric Teichman, departed.

#### Consulate Not Informed

Up to noon today no word was received at the local British Consulate-General regarding the nature of Sir Miles' conversation with Dr. Wang. Whether Sir Miles has made formal demands upon the Chinese government for punishment of Chinese soldiers alleged to have arrested and detained young John Thorburn is still unknown.

Sir Miles has been instructed by his government in London to demand another investigation by the Chinese in the Thorburn case. The instructions from London followed almost two full months of spirited agitation on the part of the local press for justice in young Thorburn's disappearance.

#### Kenia Missing 30 Days

With future extraterritoriality negotiations possibly hanging in the balance, interest in the Thorburn case has intensified this week. This morning Mr. J. P. Brennan, British Consul General here, paced wearily to and fro in his office as to the latest developments in Sir Miles' visit.

Young John Thorburn will be missing from Shanghai two months tomorrow. He disappeared on June 1 to seek adventure, was seen at various times near Soochow until about June 15, after which time he vanished. Soochow is less than 50 miles from Shanghai.

#### Lead Grows

It was announced by Mr. H. J. Andrews, a friend of the missing youth, that the international list started last week in protest against the inaction in the Thorburn case now bears more than 400 signatures, representing 26 different nationalities. Those who have not yet signed and wish to do so will find a circular list at the S.V.C. Club in the Administration Building, Pukow Road.

The \$5,000 reward offered by The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury for information leading to the whereabouts, dead or alive of John Thorburn still was unclaimed.

## Thorburn Affair A Test Case For Both China And Britain, Declares 'Times'

LONDON CANNOT SUFFER ITS SUBJECTS  
TO BE ARRESTED BY MILITARY AND  
THEN DONE TO DEATH

NOTHING DOUBTFUL ABOUT FATE OF  
EXTRALITY TALK, SAYS 'TELEGRAPH'

Any Abdication Of Its Duty Would Deeply Discredit  
British Government In Public Opinion; Lord  
Palmerston Would Not Have TempORIZED

LONDON, July 28.—A very indignant leading article on the Thorburn case is published by the "Daily Telegraph" this morning. Remarking ironically that it has taken two months to decide that Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister, should personally take up the case with the Chinese Government, the paper declares that whatever reply to the British demands may be forthcoming from General Chiang Kai-shek, there ought to be "nothing doubtful about the fate of the preposterous diplomatic extrajudicial proceedings which assume a rank's ability to carry out 'the ordinary operations of a civilized government.'"

The "Times" states that the Chinese Government has been asked to release the British subjects who are being held in the Chinese military custody and to do so at once. It would be a deep disgrace to the British Government if it failed to do so. It would also be a disgrace to the Chinese Government if it failed to do so. The Chinese Government is asked to release the British subjects who are being held in the Chinese military custody and to do so at once. It would be a deep disgrace to the British Government if it failed to do so. It would also be a disgrace to the Chinese Government if it failed to do so.

A Demanded Admission  
On the other hand, the paper says, the Chinese Government must be prepared to admit that it is not a sovereign state and that it is not a member of the League of Nations. It is a mere puppet of the British Government and it is not a sovereign state. It is not a member of the League of Nations. It is a mere puppet of the British Government and it is not a sovereign state.

The paper also states that the Chinese Government is not a sovereign state and that it is not a member of the League of Nations. It is a mere puppet of the British Government and it is not a sovereign state. It is not a member of the League of Nations. It is a mere puppet of the British Government and it is not a sovereign state.

The Editors Of 'The Times'  
Before the British Government irretrievably commits itself, it says, the least that public opinion is entitled to expect is that it should most carefully ponder the lessons of the Thorburn case and give consideration to the recommendations of Mr. Justice Fotham.

The present system, concludes the "Times," contains admitted defects and anomalies which should be abolished, but in the Treaty Ports and particularly in Shanghai, there is a nucleus of stability which is far too important a factor in the orderly progress of China to be jeopardized by a Government unable or unwilling, to compel its own servants to respect the law or even to call them to account when they have flagrantly broken it.

The "Daily Express" remarks that Lord Palmerston, who knew the value of prestige in the Orient, would not have waited half as long as Sir Miles Lampson has done.

It adds that Sir Miles Lampson must compensate for Mr. Arthur Henderson's tardiness by acting with double vigour and insistence. —Reuter.

20/7/24

1972

THE THURBURN CASE  
 The British Minister reached the capital on Friday night to complete his summer vacation. The urgency of the Thurburn case caused this to be cut short, however, on instructions received from the Home Government, it is believed.

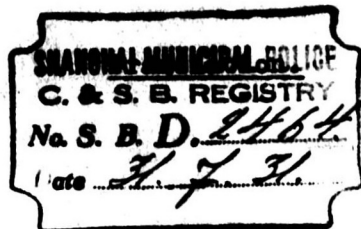
No statement could be made yesterday by the British Consul-General Mr. J. F. Brennan C.M.G. as to the plans or movements of the Minister apart from the fact that he had reached Nanking. The Minister, it is understood, intends making direct representations to General Chiang Kai-shek in a further effort to solve the mystery of the disappearance of John Thurburn, 19-year-old British youth missing from his home in Shanghai for two months.

Agitation locally for official action in the matter has temporarily subsided since news of the Minister's movements has reached the city, although interest in the case is believed to have been heightened rather than diminished, in spite of lack of outward evidence of same.

*Handwritten signature*  
 30/7/31

Le Journal de Shanghai.

dated July 30, 1931.



The Case of Thorburn and its reflections.

Our contemporary The North China Daily News published yesterday once again details in connection with the case of Thorburn. The young Englishman was seen in Soochow on June 10 by a witness at about dusk. He was in a pitiful state, wounded, covered with blood, and his hands tied at the back, pushed by soldiers who appeared to be conducting him to a place from which there is no return. (Here follows an extract on the subject from the "North China Daily News").

Despite the negative result of an enquiry conducted by the Nanking Government nobody doubts any longer that the young Thorburn had been arrested by the soldiers of Soochow garrison, was tortured by them and very possibly executed under circumstances which we are ignorant of but which it would be interesting to know.

We think that the officials of Waichiao are persons of too much intelligence to believe that the report of the enquiry commission appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the War Ministry, is correct. It is probable that upon learning of the execution of Thorburn by the soldiers, the enquiry commission decided to throw a thick veil over the whole of this affair in order to hide from the world the real situation in China, which official representatives of Nanking Government abroad describe as a country where law is respected, where good order prevails, and where extraterritoriality is to all appearances an anomaly..

Leaders of the Anglo-Saxon nations have since many months now been conducting negotiations on the subject of extraterritoriality. In obedience to certain reasons of opportunism which we shall refrain from discussing, or in support of certain influences, which we shall not comment upon or pass judgment on, they were showing a spirit of accommodating conciliation to a great extent. Never before were there so many missionaries and foreigners arrested, carried away or massacred in China as within the past two three years, nevertheless the renunciation to special foreign rights in interior provinces, that is to say, logically, where the situation is practically the same to-day as when these rights were granted, continued to be discussed. It would seem as if one was fascinated by Nanking, where the Government had assembled numerous intelligent and educated officials and established a modern administration. What does it matter that a few hours away from Nanking the situation was quite different, the capital alone mattered together with the distinguished men who were preparing a future there. The discussions were inclined to treat the future as reality.

When news was received that in Hunan, Kiangsi, Hupeh and Nganhoei, bandits and communists had been arresting or killing missionaries, it was sufficient to deplore these sad incidents.

The case of Thorburn, by its reflections abroad, has brought about the effect of a thunderbolt. The veil which concealed the truth has been torn apart. It is only 40 kilometres from Shanghai that the military authorities



subjected directly to the Central Government have violated international conventions and ignored the authority of the Nanking Government. Furthermore, this same Government, which, we are certain, is the first to deplore the excesses of the Soochow garrison soldiers, did not, however dare to deal vigorously with the guilty military and attempted to pass the affair by in silence, thinking that the foreign opinion would get tired and would end up by finding other interests. Bad reckoning; the truth has emerged in spite of everything.

The result of all this is that the Anglo-Saxon countries are now talking of showing themselves less inclined to be conciliatory in the matter of extraterritoriality. And really speaking, when one considers that the military are in a position to oppose the Government, and to prevent the functioning of a judicial body by intimidating witnesses, the question naturally arises what will be the fate of foreigners when the abolition of extraterritoriality will have delivered them to the mercy of uncultured, brutal and unscrupulous soldiers.

G.M.

Reg. Please file  
JH  
20: 7: 31

Thorburn case

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2484  
Date 30.7.31

The Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury, Wednesday, July 29, 1931

## Lampson To Ask Troops Punished

### Demand Will Be Filed With Fresh Protest, Official State

Responding quickly to the orders of the British Foreign Office in London demanding a further investigation on the part of the Nationalist Government in the Thorburn case, Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China, landed in Nanking by plane last night.

Sir Miles' holiday at Peitaiho was ended abruptly yesterday when he was instructed to file further protest over the mysterious disappearance of young John Thorburn, 19, British subject, missing from his home in Shanghai 26 days.

#### Plans Uncertain

It was stated at the local British Consulate-General this morning that Sir Miles' plans are indefinite, but it was considered certain that demands would be made upon Chinese authorities for punishment of soldiers responsible for the detention or possible slaying of young Thorburn.

Sir Miles may make a flying trip to Nanchang to deliver his message personally to General Chia; Kai-shak, or else he may make his demands to Dr. C. T. Wang, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

#### New Evidence

Meanwhile further evidence was uncovered in an attempt to corroborate the opinion expressed by previous investigators that young Thorburn was arrested by Chinese soldiers at Soochow.

A man now in this city, whose identity is being kept secret, has described how he saw the youth badly injured in the company of Chinese gendarmes in Soochow on June 10. Young Thorburn was bleeding and bound. It was charged, being driven by Chinese soldiers to a boat in the creek for transportation, evidently to Taihu Lake, which is 10 miles away from Soochow.

#### Great Secrecy

His head and body were cut and bleeding, it was stated. Passersby were threatened when they attempted to approach the youth. It was charged, and the Chinese soldiers were taking great care to insure secrecy in their operations.

The reward of \$5,000 offered by The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury for information leading to the whereabouts of Mr. John Thorburn, dead or alive, still is unchanged. A bonus of awards will decide the virtue of all claims and information received will be held in strict confidence.

Receipt  
7/31

# Lampson Flying To Nanking For Thorburn Probe

## Minister To Press For Fuller Information On British Youth

(Reader's Pacific Service)

PEKING, July 28.—It is understood here that Sir Miles Lampson left Peking for his trip to Nanking for the purpose of ascertaining the facts of the case of the British youth, John Thorburn, who has been missing for 56 days. From Nanking, he will go to Shanghai and then to Canton, Kai-shak.

(Reader's Pacific Service)

PEKING, July 28.—The French aviator, Louis de Belvoir, accompanied by his wife, flew from Peking to Paitiao this morning with the intention of picking up Sir Miles Lampson and conveying him to Nanking. However, owing to the floods in the capital, the authorities here are doubtful whether they will be able to land in Nanking.

Demand Before China

Decision of the British government to ask the Chinese government "with all expedition to find means of persuading the military authorities concerned of the urgent necessity of enabling the Chinese Government to carry out the ordinary obligations of a civilized state" has led Dr. Hugh Dalton, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to instruct Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China to place the demand before President Chiang Kai-shek himself.

Sir Miles will arrive with his staff at Nanking next Friday, it was announced by the local British Consulate yesterday. This has necessitated his cutting short his holiday at Paitiao where he has been for some time.

The protection of the rights of British subjects in China has been renewed in the minds of members of the House of Commons as a result of the persistent publicity that has been given the case of John Thorburn, who has been missing from his home in Shanghai for 56 days. From various editorials, petitions of loyal British subjects all have contributed to arousing the government of Great Britain to request their representative in China to demand action.

The special demands of the British government are that the Chinese Government find Mr. Thorburn and deliver him to British authorities.

See also the report that Sir Miles Lampson had been instructed to convey the demand to the Chinese Government and to the Chinese authorities to take steps to find Mr. Thorburn and deliver him to British authorities.

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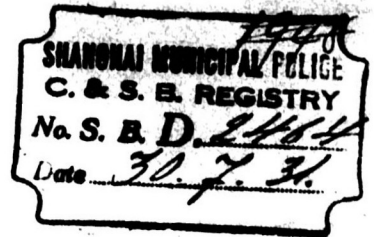
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*Handwritten signature*  
29/7/31

*Handwritten notes and signatures*



THE SHANGHAI TIMES, TUESDAY, JULY 28, 1931

### Thorburn Case Goes Step Farther

LONDON, July 27.—Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China, has been instructed to take the Thorburn case to General Chiang Kai-shek, since "His Majesty's Government must insist upon the proper protection of British subjects."

This was the statement made by Dr. George Baker, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in answering questions in the House of Commons this afternoon.

Reuter.

*Ind*  
27/7/31

*File*  
*MLG*

✓

## THE THORBURN CASE

Demand for Surrender of  
Missing Briton

HELD BY MILITARY

Further Representations  
Authorized

From Our Own Correspondent

London, July 23

I am officially informed that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Arthur Henderson, this morning authorized further representations to the Nanking Government over the disappearance of Mr. J. H. Thorburn. A demand is to be made that Mr. Thorburn be produced for immediate trial under British law, in accordance with the extraterritoriality provisions of the treaty between Great Britain and China.

From an independent source the British Government has been informed that Mr. Thorburn, alive or dead, is in the hands of the Chinese military.

### Local Protests

That the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn, and the apparent official indifference to his whereabouts, is actively engaging the attention of Britons everywhere in China is indicated by a telegram received yesterday from Weihaiwei.

This reported that 52 signatures to the protest recently circulated among local British residents had been mailed from visitors to that summer resort.

The list of signatures to the protest is otherwise steadily growing and indignation has obviously transcended the bounds of nationality. A non-British protest, now in circulation, yesterday afternoon had 24 nationalities represented by its more than 200 endorers.

### Government Approach

The telegram sent to London by the China Association after its meeting on July 21 has also had gratifying results, according to word received yesterday from Home. The London executive of the Association has now undertaken to bring the circumstances of the Thorburn case vividly before the people of Great Britain and as an initial effort in this connection has already broadcast the text of the telegram throughout the country.

The Parent Body has also arranged for a number of further questions to be asked in the House of Commons in regard to Thorburn's whereabouts and has approached the Government on the subject. Although no definite action has yet been notified by the Government, nor a reply received to the letter containing particulars of the protest and its reasons, it is confidently expected that satisfactory information will be available for transmission to Shanghai at an early date.

SI.  
Please pass to  
Reg. White JPH  
Regy. Please file  
H.R. 24/45

1931

### China Association Holds On Resolutions From

LONDON, July 25.—The China Association, London, today held a meeting at the Hotel Cecil to discuss the resolutions passed by the Shanghai Municipal Council on July 21.

The Association has been arranged for a number of resolutions to be taken in the House of Commons in regard to the recent disturbances and has approached the Government on the subject. It is quite likely, however, that the Government has a reply to the latter.

LONDON, July 25.—The British Government is believed to be taking the view that the Chinese Government is responsible for the recent disturbances. It is believed that the Chinese Government is responsible for the recent disturbances. It is believed that the Chinese Government is responsible for the recent disturbances.

The British Government is believed to be taking the view that the Chinese Government is responsible for the recent disturbances. It is believed that the Chinese Government is responsible for the recent disturbances.

SI, Rease pass Wley. to file

27:7:31

D. 2464.

1925

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 27-7-25

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1925

### FURTHER QUESTIONS ON THORBURN

Interpellations To Be Put  
To Henderson Next  
Monday

### DANGERS OF GIVING UP EXTRALITY RIGHTS

LONDON, July 23.—The interest taken by the House of Commons in the case of Mr. Thorburn is indicated by the fact that further questions will be put to Mr. Arthur Henderson, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on Monday.

The line taken by the Conservatives is that the case illustrates the dangers of relinquishing extrajurisdiction or of any measure which would place Europeans under Chinese authority.

The firm line indicated in the replies given by the Government in the House of Commons yesterday is welcomed, and it is stated that every possible step will be taken to keep the question in active being until it is settled satisfactorily. —Reuter.

Reg  
Please file.  
JH

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
 C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
 No S. B. D. 2464  
 Date 27-7-31

THE SHANGHAI FREE PRESS, FRIDAY, JULY 27, 1931

*[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to heavy noise and poor reproduction quality. It appears to be a formal document or report.]*

*[Handwritten signature]*  
 25/7/31

*Reg please file*  
*[Handwritten initials]*





## Additional Evidence Is Found Thorburn Was Arrested By Gendarmes

PRIEST TELLS OF YET FROM BRITISH  
YOUTH DURING NIGHT OF JUNE 1 AND  
SUBSEQUENT ARREST BY SOLDIERS

STRUGGLES WITH CAPTORS AND RECEIVES  
BAYONET WOUND IN NECK

Appeal Of Local British Residents Received In  
London; Reply Comes Back Meeting Action  
Will Be Taken; Chinese Government

"The Shanghai Times" is able to give additional indubitable evidence of the fact that John Thorburn, 19-year-old British resident of Shanghai, who has been missing for over seven weeks, was actually arrested in the vicinity of Quinsan by Chinese soldiers. The evidence has been furnished by a Catholic priest who saw Thorburn on the night of June 1 and who says he was taken by Chinese police and taken off to Quinsan. The evidence also shows that Thorburn broke away from his captors and dashed down the railway line where he was intercepted and again arrested after a struggle, during which he was wounded in the neck by a bayonet carried by one of the soldiers. What happened to Thorburn after his second arrest is a mystery which the entire foreign community of Shanghai is anxious to solve, with or without the aid of the Chinese authorities.

The further proof of Thorburn's arrest has come from a reliable source. The report gives details of the incident actually witnessed by the priest. It states that Thorburn was seen by the priest on the night of June 1, and that he was taken to Quinsan by Chinese soldiers. The priest also states that Thorburn was wounded in the neck by a bayonet carried by one of the soldiers.

It was reported that Thorburn was seen by the priest on the night of June 1, and that he was taken to Quinsan by Chinese soldiers. The priest also states that Thorburn was wounded in the neck by a bayonet carried by one of the soldiers. The priest also states that Thorburn was taken to Quinsan by Chinese soldiers.

24/7/31

Reg. Read file  
JH  
24/7/31



The Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury, Thursday, July 23, 1931

## Lampson Warns Wang To Probe Thorburn Case

Minister Has Condemned  
Action By Nanking,  
Parliament Told

FEELING AROUSED  
IN GREAT BRITAIN

Dalton Tells Commons  
Sir Miles Demands  
Investigation

(United Press)  
LONDON, July 22.—Any further delay on the part of the Chinese Government in solving the mysterious disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn, the year-old British subject who has been missing for almost two months from his home in Shanghai, will confirm the suspicion that the Chinese Government is deliberately procrastinating. Mr. Hugh Dalton, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs declared in the House of Commons tonight.

Replying to blunt questions from Sir Charles Cuyser, the Conservative member of Parliament for the City of Chester, Under-Secretary Dalton said that already Sir Miles Lampson, His Britannic Majesty's Minister in China, has made strong representations to the Chinese National Government at Nanking.

In his representations to Dr. G. T. Wang, the Foreign Minister of the Nanking Government, Sir Miles Lampson has expressed regret that there has been no further clarification of the disappearance of Mr. Thorburn since the statement of the Chinese authorities that their investigation showed that the young British subject never was arrested nor imprisoned by the Chinese police or military.

Mr. Dalton said that Sir Miles Lampson has warned the Foreign Minister at Nanking that "any further delay will confirm the suspicion that the Chinese authorities are deliberately procrastinating, believing that the Thorburn case can be hushed up and eventually forgotten."

Indignation in England Growing  
Through the efforts of British subjects in China, especially in Shanghai, and because of the interest which has been aroused in official circles in England the Thorburn case is receiving widespread publicity in England.

Indignation has mounted since the receipt of cabled reports of the only official statement given out by the Nanking Government last week. Belief here prevails that it would have been impossible for Mr. Thorburn to disappear completely from the earth within only a few miles of Shanghai without the knowledge of the Chinese authorities, who enjoy automatic recognition by the British Government.

Issue Linked With Extrajurisdiction  
The British press is carrying full and detailed accounts of the Thorburn case, the feeling it has aroused throughout China and criticism of British as well as of Chinese officials.

A very definite connection between the Thorburn case and China's demands for the abolition of extrajurisdiction is seen by many British editors.

Amass Bond Message  
The Amass Society of Shanghai, the newest British organization here, yesterday added its protest to those already sent to London by various other organizations, including the St. George's Society, St. Andrew's Society, St. Patrick's Society and St. David's Society. The protest of the Amass Society was in the form of a telegram to the British Prime Minister. The message follows:

"Shanghai Amass Society, consisting of Amass who fought in Great War, and Australasia, New Zealanders resident in China, record strongest indignation on disappearance of John Thorburn. Despite exhaustive evidence of arrest obtained by British authorities, Chinese Government denies all knowledge of his whereabouts. Amass Society prays that immediate action be taken to safeguard British prestige as the future safety of all Britishers in China is dependent on this."

New Evidence Found  
New evidence concerning the arrest of young Thorburn has been uncovered, according to one report made public this morning. The report states that a Catholic priest living near Quinan has come forward with the story of the arrest of the youth.

The young man, according to the priest, called at his home about 10 p.m. on June 1. He knocked at the door and was admitted. His clothing was found to have been thoroughly wet. He remarked that he had fallen into the water. The following morning, the priest says, the youth was the same but had none only a short distance when he was seized by soldiers. He broke away after a struggle, ran, but again was seized, being wounded in the neck by a bullet in the hands of a soldier. The last the priest saw of him he was being hurried off in the direction of the Quinan railway station.

British Women Protest  
It is announced that all British women interested in the Thorburn case will send a list for signatures to the British Women's Association, 13 The Strand, before morning office hour 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

See  
Please file 24. 7. 31

1909

THE NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1931

Mr. Nasser's Appeal

To the Editor of the

"NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS."

Sir,—Last evening I sent off the following wire to Mr. F. H. Crossley, formerly of Shanghai, and well-known to most of the older residents here:—

"Please furnish most of the London papers with the following:—

An appeal signed by 2,500 British subjects in Shanghai earnestly requests the assistance of the London Press in giving the greatest publicity to the case of young Thierburn held without trial by the Chinese Authorities for over six weeks and every indication tortured, mutilated or dead. Immediate strong action by the British Government absolutely essential and to secure this your valued help is asked. This request becomes the more urgent in view of the sensational reply issued 18th by the Chinese Government regarding investigation. Kindly acknowledge receipt of this telegram."

I am glad to say I received the reply early this morning.

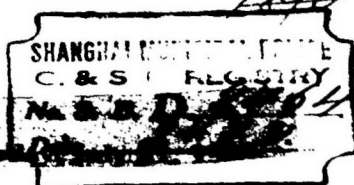
"Telegram received will act"

Crossley.

A. P. NASSER.

Shanghai, July 22.

*Just*  
22/7/31.



## 800 British Residents Sign Protest On Thorburn Case

1,000 Signatures Expected Before Closing Time  
Today; Revised Text Of Cable Released

More than 800 British men and women residents of Shanghai at noon today had signed the Thorburn Appeal List, open to British residents for signature at 6 Peking Road. Indications at noon, despite threatening weather, were that fully 1,000 British residents will have signed the list before 4:30 p.m., which is closing time.

As soon as the list has been closed, it was stated today by Mr. A. P. Waser, sponsor of the plan, the following cablegram will be dispatched to the leading newspaper of London:

### Text Of Telegram

An appeal signed by British subjects in Shanghai earnestly requests the assistance of the London press in giving the greatest publicity to the case of young Thorburn held without trial by the Chinese authorities for more than six weeks and every day subjected to mistreatment or death. (stop) Immediate strong action by the government absolutely essential and to secure this your papers help to draw public attention to the case. (stop) The Chinese Government's mendacious reply issued 18th by the Chinese Government regarding their investigation (stop).

A representative of The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury this morning was permitted to scan the list of signatures. A considerable number of names of outstanding British residents was noted.

### Missing Since June 1

The list was opened to British residents as the result of the strange disappearance from Shanghai on June 1 of Mr. John Thorburn, 19, who has been missing for 31 days.

British authorities, from information obtained from various Chinese sources, have reason to believe that the young man was arrested by the police shortly after his disappearance, followed by the shooting of two Chinese subjects; was taken to Soochow and either was put to death, after being tortured, or is badly injured and is being held a prisoner.

### British Rights Denied

Representations were made to the Nanking Government by the British Minister to China, Sir Miles Lampson, through Mr. [Name],

signature already have been forwarded to London by St. Andrew's Society, the local branch of the Royal Air Forces Association and the Royal Society of St. George.

SL, Please pass to  
Ray. Wile. JH  
Noted & passed  
HR 23/4

RECEIVED  
JUN 1 1934

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 08-22-2001 BY 60322 UCBAW/SJS

6-7-8

SHANGHAI MUNIT  
C. & S. L. REC  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 21.7.51

THE CHINA PRESS, TUESDAY, JULY 21, 1951

## Therburn Petition Has Many Signers

British And Foreign  
People Sign

Mr. A. P. Therburn, a British citizen, has announced that he has received a petition for the release of the Chinese people from the British and Foreign people. The petition, which is signed by 15,000 people, is being presented to the British Government. Mr. Therburn, who is a member of the British Parliament, has said that the petition is a reflection of the feeling of the British people towards the Chinese people. He has also said that the petition is a reflection of the feeling of the British people towards the Chinese people.

The petition was sent to all leading London newspapers, and through them, Mr. Therburn hopes the petition will gain widespread support. Mr. Therburn has said that he thought this method would be more effective than directly petitioning the Prime Minister or the House of Commons.

While many foreigners sought to sign the petition, however, some British citizens were allowed. Approximately 100 signed between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Local newspaper authorities would not be expected to sign, Mr. Therburn said.

20/7/51

Reg. Please file. JWS

21:7:51

self and could not say if it was true."

**British**  
"The Southbridge in Canton stated that the foreigner had been put on the train going westward just after 1 p.m. on June 2. He was in the custody of a group of military police. He said the foreigner had an interpreter on his hand, and he noticed some of the soldiers in the vicinity. Then he saw one of the posts at the station platform. The words were still there on June 10 when they were sent to Vice-Consul Reed. He then noticed something there and when he returned to the station afterwards, that they then carefully viewed."

**Chinese**  
"We then called on the Quinsan District Magistrate and the Commissioner of Police. They said that a British Vice-Consul and Mr. Wang King of the North China Daily News had been at Kichuan to inquire. They had then informed them that they only heard that two Chinese gendarmes had been wounded; they had not heard that a foreigner had been arrested."

**British**  
No direct British statement.

**Chinese**  
"We then returned to the headquarters of the British Consulate in the First District of the Canton. There we saw a British Vice-Consul and a British Consul. They said that they had been at Kichuan to inquire. They had then informed them that they only heard that two Chinese gendarmes had been wounded; they had not heard that a foreigner had been arrested."

**Chinese**  
"The wife of the proprietor of the Tung An-ling dry goods store at Quinsan, who said that about 1 p.m. on June 2, a young foreigner, whom she identified from a photograph as Tien-tien, came to her shop and made a small purchase. He was wearing a pair of dark blue trousers with red lines down the outside of each leg. The following day she saw the same foreigner with his hands tied behind his back in the custody of the Military Police and she said he had been put on a train."

**British**  
"The 2nd corps, 'the Tung' of the 4th Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment of the Military Police, spoke of the shooting incident and the arrest of a foreigner who was taken to Quinsan where he was detained until the afternoon of June 2, when he was removed under escort."

**Chinese**  
"After that we asked Kollman, the Vice-Consul, if he had been a foreigner escorted by gendarmes on June 1 or 2. He said he had not."

**Chinese**  
"Yen Yeh-1, policeman assigned to the first substation in Quinsan, who said he had seen a foreigner wearing long trousers with red stripes down each side, was shown by the military police with the hands tied behind his back, and that he had been put on a train going west just after 1 o'clock on June 2."

**Chinese**  
"We then returned to the photographer at Quinsan who said that no foreigner had been to him lately to have his photograph taken."

**Chinese**  
"It is reported that a photograph of the foreigner had been taken from a shop and he had no copy of the photograph as the negative had been taken away by the military police."

**Chinese**  
No Chinese statement.

**British**  
Another statement in Quinsan

stated that a foreigner had been arrested and had given his nationality as English.

**Chinese**  
No Chinese statement.

**British**  
"The wife of the proprietor of the Tung An-ling dry goods store at Quinsan, who said that about 1 p.m. on June 2, a young foreigner, whom she identified from a photograph as Tien-tien, came to her shop and made a small purchase. He was wearing a pair of dark blue trousers with red lines down the outside of each leg. The following day she saw the same foreigner with his hands tied behind his back in the custody of the Military Police and she said he had been put on a train."



**Appendix 1**

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# Shanghai Times

刊期星) 報士唔泰

S. B. D. 2484

20.7.31

THE SHANGHAI SUNDAY TIMES, JULY 19, 1931

When You  
Think of



1265 Bubbling Well Road. Tel. 32626

PRICE TWENTY CENTS

## CHINESE AUTHORITIES DENY ALL KNOWLEDGE OF MISSING BRITISH SUBJECT THORBURN

### ATTEMPT TO DESTROY ST. PETER'S, ROME

Powerful Bomb Carried  
Out Of Church Before  
Heavy Explosion

### SMASHES WINDOWS IN VATICAN GALLERY

ROME, July 17. The discovery of a powerful bomb in St. Peter's, the most sacred Catholic church, has caused a tremendous sensation inasmuch as according to experts its explosion in any case would have seriously damaged the famous cupola of the basilica, which was designed by Michel Angelo, even if a still greater catastrophe had been averted.

The bomb was found after the basilica had been closed to the public. It was wrapped in paper in a confessional directly beneath the cupola and close to the monument of Pope Benedict XV. It exploded spontaneously at two o'clock this morning at an isolated spot in the Vatican gardens whither it had been removed after its discovery by Papal guards.

The force of the explosion, which was heard all over Rome, awakened the Pope from his sleep and smashed a number of windows in the Vatican's picture gallery, but thanks to the precautions taken did no further damage. Clues as to the perpetrators of this barbarous attempt to destroy one of the world's most famous and sacred buildings have not yet been found, though the city is full of contradictory rumours, circles close to the Italian Government, which immediately ordered a strict investigation, claiming that it must have been the work of anti-Bolsheviks who wanted to arouse the anger of the Pope against the Vatican and the Cardinal. Trans-scean-Kuo Min.

### Official Statement From Foreign Office At Nanking Says He Was Not Arrested

INVESTIGATION AT SOOCHOW AND QUINSAN  
BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRODUCES  
NOTHING BUT REPEATED DENIALS

### REMARKABLE CONTRADICTIONS FROM WITNESSES IN SECOND ENQUIRY

### Stationmaster, Chinese Porters, Constable And Residents Who Previously Admitted Seeing Bound Foreigner, Now Deny Statements

In an official statement from the Foreign Office of the Nanking Government to the British Consul-General in Shanghai, the results of the Chinese investigation into the disappearance of Joan Thorburn, 19-year-old British resident of Shanghai, were communicated yesterday morning. It is denied that Thorburn, or any other foreigner, was arrested by the Gendarmerie, or that any foreigner was concerned in the shooting incident in the vicinity of Quinsan on June 1. Allegations that any foreigner had been imprisoned, wounded or beaten, either at Quinsan or Soochow, are denied by the Chinese officials. All knowledge of the whereabouts of John Thorburn are also firmly denied.

The statement from Nanking Nanking railway line between Quinsan and Soochow on June 1. Since that date he has not been found. Reports from various sources indicated that he had been arrested by Chinese military police in the vicinity of Quinsan. All efforts to trace him proved fruitless and the Nanking Government, through the British Minister, Sir Miles Lampson, was asked to conduct an investigation into this mysterious disappearance. The results of the investigation by Chinese Government officials is as follows:

John Thorburn disappeared somewhere along the Shanghai

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## WERE ALL THESE PEOPLE LYING?

The following points, taken from statements to British Consular investigators by Chinese at Soochow and Quinsan, are of great importance in the Thorburn investigation and compel close attention. Before the Chinese investigation began, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was informed in writing of the substance of the evidence in the hands of the British authorities. The following points were particularly stressed:

1.—Sia Zui-soong, "ba tsang" of the 4th Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment of the Military Police spoke of the shooting incident and the arrest of a foreigner, who was taken to Quinsan, where he was detained until the afternoon of June 2, when he was removed under escort.

2.—The wife of the proprietor of the Tsang Ah-sing dry goods store at Quinsan stated that at about 4 p.m. on June 1, a young foreigner, whom she identified from a photograph as Thorburn, went to her shop and made a small purchase. He was wearing a pair of dark blue trousers with red lines down the side of each leg. On the following day she saw the same foreigner with his hands tied behind his back in the custody of the Military Police. She said he was put on a train.

3.—A policeman named You Loh-li, attached to the 1st Sub-Station in Quinsan, said he had seen a foreigner wearing long trousers with two red stripes, being taken along the street by the Military Police with his hands tied behind his back. He was put on a train going west just after 1 o'clock on June 2.

4.—Another policeman in Quinsan gave corroborative evidence and stated that the foreigner had given his nationality as English.

5.—When questioned, the stationmaster at Quinsan said that a foreigner had been put on the train going westward just after 1 p.m. on June 2. He was in the custody of a party of Military Police. He also stated that the foreigner had an inscription on his handkerchief and that he actually wrote the words "Sea Scout Troop" on one of the posts of the station platform. The words were still there on June 10 and were seen on that date by Mr. Scott, British Vice-Consul. He was noticed examining them, but when he returned to the station shortly afterwards they had been carefully erased.

6.—The Li-li Photograph Shop in Quinsan when visited revealed further evidence. Here it was learned that a photograph of the foreigner had been taken, shortly after his arrest, but the owner of the shop had no copy of the photograph as the negative had been taken away by the Military Police.

7.—Two porters at the Soochow Railway Station, No.s 93 and 105, stated they saw the foreigner on the afternoon of June 2 being sent under a Military Police escort to the Military Headquarters.

## WERE ALL THESE PEOPLE LYING?

## Amateur Bath-House Racketeer Finally, Lands In Gaol

Ingenuity, not modesty, was the chief characteristic of Yang, a bath-house thief now "doing time" in the Municipal guest-house on Ward Road, according to the evidence submitted by aggrieved witnesses appearing at Yang's trial.

Apparently Saturday night is "bath night" the world over for those not particularly addicted to self-ablution. At any rate Saturday night was Yang's big night of the week and he made it a practice of visiting a bath-house on Avenue Edward VII where the clientele was more dressy than at most other places. Subsequent events proved that Yang was more interested in the habiliments of his fellow-bathers than in his own cleansing.

For instance, a week ago he suddenly let out a first-class bath-house war-whoop and called for the Riot Squad, the Ambulance Corps, S.V.C. and Chapei Gendarmerie, declaring to an excited multitude that some one had

stolen his pants.

He got no satisfaction from the proprietor. But when that worthy's back was turned Yang grabbed a spare pair of the proprietor's and slipped into the street with only a shirt on.

The following Saturday he tried the same trick at another bath-house, this time calling for everybody's help except that of the Footing Protection Corps. Then, as the excitement commenced to die down, he seized a nifty silk jacket and hit out for the highway with hue and cry after him. This time he was caught.

On trial Yang stated that the bath-house proprietor merely had a grudge against him for using too much soap. In fact, said Yang, he had once hit him over head with a wooden bucket for using too much.

This the proprietor denied, but went one better by telling the court that the jacket stolen had contained \$500. The years for Yang.

## FOREIGN OFFICE REPORT OF ENQUIRY

With regard to the disappearance without trace of the British resident of Shanghai, Thorburn, it is on record that repeated letters have been received from the British Consul-General at Nanking requesting investigation; also that the replies of the various Departments concerned have been communicated to the British Consul-General. Further, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of War each sent an official of their respective Ministries to conduct a joint and strict investigation. These two officials have now reported as follows:

In pursuance of our instructions, we at once left for Soochow where we first visited the headquarters of the First Regiment of Gendarmerie occupying the Lao Wu T'uan Barracks. We were informed by the Colonel of the said Regiment that the Regiment certainly had not arrested any foreigner. As regards the matter of the wounding by shooting of two gendarmes at Weiting near Kunshan (Quinsan), the bandits had made good their escape owing to the passing of a train (between the combatants). Not only was no foreigner arrested on that occasion, but no Chinese was captured. We, thereupon, inspected the regimental gaol, where we found only two Chinese prisoners. Both were gendarmes. There was no foreigner in the gaol. We then inspected the military goal. There were four prisons and one prison-hospital and three workshops. We examined them all, one after another, and found that they contained no foreigner.

## SOOCHOW MAGISTRATE'S DENIAL

We then went to the District Magistracy of Wuhsien (Soochow). We were informed that on receipt of instructions from the Ministry ordering an investigation, the Magistrate at once wrote to the Headquarters of the First Regiment of Gendarmerie and also ordered the Commissioner of Police to investigate and report. The Gendarmerie headquarters replied that no foreigner whatever had been arrested. The Commissioner of Police reported that he had made investigations and found that there was no truth in the allegation that a foreigner had been arrested.

We then proceeded to the Soochow Railway Station where we interviewed the stationmaster and the assistant stationmaster, and asked them whether on or about the 2nd of June they had seen on the station premises a party of gendarmes guarding a foreigner. They replied that they were very busily engaged every day in the performance of their duties and did not know whether gendarmes had or had not brought a foreign prisoner to the station. Recently Mr. Scott, a British Vice-Consul, had visited the station and inter-

1843

## Thorburn Case Goes Before Public Of Britain

St. Andrew's Society Of Shanghai Sends Telegram To Mr. Ramsay MacDonald Deploring Ineffective Policy; Home Newspapers Informed

Intervention by the British Government for the release of John Thorburn, 19-year-old British subject alleged to be in the hands of Chinese military authorities for a period now exceeding six weeks, is being sought by the Shanghai branch of St. Andrew's Society, which has interested itself in the affair for humane and national reasons.

A telegram to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, British Prime Minister, was dispatched from Shanghai by the Society yesterday, as follows:

"John Thorburn, British subject, held six weeks without trial near Nanking by Chinese authorities. Tortured, mutilated or dead. Known to have been alive three weeks ago. Request for Sino-British investigation refused. St. Andrew's Society of Shanghai deplors ineffective policy of Foreign Office and calls for strong, definite action."

"Signed, Committee of St. Andrews Society, S'hai."

Arrangements have also been made to issue this telegram through Reuter's Agency to newspapers at Home for the purpose of calling attention to the plight of young Thorburn whose fate, like his exact whereabouts, continue to remain a mystery.

Thorburn disappeared from his

home, 315 Rue Bourgeat, French Concession, on June 1.

### Movements Traced

Evidence collected since his disappearance by Consular officials and Chinese policemen, and independent investigators points to his having headed in the direction of Nanking, following the railway route. He is believed to have got into difficulties with some Chinese soldiers as a result of a shooting episode along the railway embankment near Quinsan, and to have been taken prisoner and removed to Soochow military barracks.

It has been reported that he was transferred elsewhere, and has been held prisoner since.

Corroborated testimony has also been collected by British Consular officers investigating on the spot that Thorburn was tied to a tree and beaten in the presence of a number of Soochow villagers while an uncorroborated report was received to the effect that one of his soldier guards stabbed him with a bayonet.

All but definite proof of Thorburn having been held in prison at Soochow was collected by Mr. A. Scott, British Vice-Consul at Shanghai, who remained for over a week in Soochow conducting an exhaustive inquiry. But although the British official returned satisfied that Thorburn was in the hands of the military, he could not trace his whereabouts.

### Minister Intervenes

He gathered sufficient evidence, however, to prompt the British Minister to China, Sir Miles Lampson, to send a representative to Nanking with a request for an official investigation.

This representative, Mr. Frank Aveling, called upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Nanking, who deputed a representative from the Ministry and another from the Ministry of War to proceed to Soochow and investigate the reports furnished by the British authorities. But Mr. Aveling's attendance at the investigation was refused.

At the present time the Nanking Government representatives are still conducting their inquiry at Soochow, while Mr. Aveling and the British authorities await their report. So far, the Chinese have been more than two weeks on their task, but not a word as to their movements or discoveries, if any, has been received by the British authorities to date.

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL

C. & S. H. L.

No. S. B. D. 2464

9-7-31

THE CHINA PRESS, WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1931

## British Authorities Laud Press Findings In Thorburn Mystery

Copy Of Reporter's Story Forwarded To Nanking  
As Material Evidence For Investigators;  
Father Of Youth Appreciates Paper's Action

Shanghai yesterday acclaimed The China Press investigation of the Thorburn disappearance as a valuable step toward the solution of the mystery and as added impetus to official inquiries now being carried out. Among those who recognized the importance of disclosures made in yesterday's China Press, as a result of the three day investigation, were Mr. M. Hay Thorburn, father of the 19-year-old Briton last seen in Shanghai on June 1, and the British superintendent consul, Mr. A. D. Blackburn.

Mr. Blackburn, yesterday sent a copy of the China Press carrying intimate disclosures on the disappearance of John Hay Thorburn, 19, believed to have been detained for five weeks by Chinese military authorities, to the British Legation at Nanking.

### Disclosures Significant

Mr. Blackburn told a China Press representative that the news story included details of a significant nature. He said that previous information gained by consular investigators and others was largely given by second and third parties. Practically all the testimony introduced into the China Press account of the alleged capture and detention of a foreigner by Chinese soldiers was given by Soochow residents who claimed to actually have seen the young man in the custody of soldiers. More than 50 witnesses were interviewed during the paper's three-day investigation.

Mr. Blackburn said that besides the quantity of added information included in the Press report, certain details differed from those collected by the British office. The consul had learned that the First Battalion held the young man, while the Press gained information from soldiers and townspeople that he was detained at the second Battalion Camp. Eye witnesses also denied the report received by British authorities to the effect that the boy had been mutilated.

### Press Probe Welcome

The consular official said that the Nanking government had sent

representatives of the War and Foreign Affairs Ministries to conduct a month's investigation of the case. One week has passed. Reports of their findings will be made public at the end of the month.

Mr. Blackburn said that the action taken by the China Press was especially welcome inasmuch as it came at a time when the hands of the British authorities were practically tied. He said that the Chinese government at Nanking had not definitely forbidden a British investigation of the Thorburn disappearance, but that when it was asked to sanction the sending of Mr. Aveling to represent the British government in the inquiry, the Chinese responded that they could conduct their own investigation. Mr. Blackburn said there is no objection to an informal British investigation, but the above response is in effect a refusal to allow a foreign representative to sit with them in consideration of evidence on the Thorburn case. The British government can only await developments brought about by the Chinese investigation, he declared.

### Father Appreciative

Mr. Thorburn expressed his appreciation of the step taken by the China Press toward determining the fate of his son. He said that he had not yet given up hope that his son would be returned to him, and that the account in the China Press substantiated beliefs of his that his son was still alive.

"I greatly appreciate the action of the China Press in initiating an

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THE SHANGHAI TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1931

## Thorburn Now Missing 37 Days; Official "Search" Fruitless

The whereabouts of John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton who disappeared on June 1 after setting out in the direction of Quinsan, are still definitely unknown to British Consular authorities and everyone else desirous of locating him, it was learned during inquiries yesterday.

It is significant, however, that although the committee of inquiry sent to Soochow by the Nanking Government at the request of the British Minister to China have been investigating for more than a week, they have not, so far, communicated to the British authorities any information whatsoever. According to their plans, they will continue to investigate for another three weeks, then return to Nanking and render their report.

In the meantime Mr. Frank Aveling, personal representative of H. M. Minister, sent to Nanking to press for this inquiry, is still at Nanking, forbidden to join the Nanking investigators at So-

chow.

Whether Thorburn is being held at Soochow, Lion Hill or anywhere else is not the real issue. It has been reported that he is now at Nanking and this report is being looked into, local British authorities stated yesterday.

Wherever Thorburn may be now cannot alter the evidence that he, or someone so like him as to satisfy the most sceptical, was seen in custody of Chinese soldiers at Soochow on or about the time of his disappearance.

This has been borne out, not by one witness, but by scores of witnesses, including railway officials, plain villagers and even soldiers themselves. Responsible British officials collected this testimony.

At Nanking or Soochow, wounded or not, guilty of the Quinsan shooting or not, the British authorities are satisfied that Thorburn was in the hands of the military. Their only doubt at present is where he may be found at this time.

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# THE THORBURN MYSTERY

Disappearance Five Weeks  
Ago To-morrow

## NO RESULTS FROM INVESTIGATIONS

To-morrow morning, July 6, there will have elapsed five weeks since Mr. John Ray Thorburn disappeared so mysteriously, and also one week will have elapsed since the National Government commenced its inquiry into his disappearance. So far official Chinese investigations have produced no result, despite the fact that the consular authorities have no doubt that Mr. Thorburn is, or has been, in Soochow or its vicinity.

Special pressure was brought to bear on the Nanking authorities by Mr. Aveling, H.M. Minister's personal representative, recently, and on July 27 he was informed by Dr. C. T. Wang, Minister for Foreign Affairs, that a representative of his ministry had already left for Soochow and that a representative of the Ministry of War was also leaving, and that official inquiries were to commence early last week. No statement has been made regarding the progress of their inquiries.

Prior to this the military police authorities at Soochow had persistently denied that they had any foreigner in custody. Mr. Thorburn left Shanghai on June 1, and on that morning a young foreigner, corresponding to him and wearing garments corresponding to those Mr. Thorburn had taken from home, was seen by Chinese in Quinsan.

### The Shooting Incident

That night, about 10 p.m., a shooting affair occurred along the railway line near Weiting, when a man originally described as a foreigner and believed to be a Russian is alleged to have shot and wounded two military police, who subsequently died in hospital in Shanghai. The next morning an alleged Russian was arrested as grave suspicion was attached to him, and taken to the headquarters of the military police in Soochow.

In a statement issued by H.M. Consulate-General and published in the "North-China Sunday News" two weeks ago the following passage occurs: "Incidence in dates str-

PRINCE OF WALES  
AT GUILDHALL  
Vignettes of Life.  
Children's Page.  
Wise and Otherwise.  
Short Story.  
The Garden of Delight—A Tiger.  
Across Asia.  
The Sino-French Expedition  
pell.  
Western Music in Japan.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL  
& S. C. REG.  
S. B. D. 2464.  
date 7-7-31

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL  
C. & S. B. REGISTR.  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
date 3. 7. 31.

THE SHANGHAI TIMES THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1931

## STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT SOOCHOW

Aveling Held At Arm's  
Length; Thorburn  
Is Moved?

### CHINESE CONDUCTING INQUIRY ALONE

For some reason best known to themselves, the Soochow military authorities are understood to have transferred John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton last seen alive by his parents on May 31, from the military prison at Soochow to other dingy quarters at Shih Tan, about a mile from the town and a half's walk from Soochow.

The transfer was accomplished nearly two weeks ago, according to information reaching the British consular authorities here. Although the report is not quite as reliable as others which have been received by the British authorities, it nonetheless has more than a probability of truth in it, as borne out by supporting evidence of a circumstantial nature.

The reason for the transfer, if transfer there actually has been, is undoubtedly the institution of an inquiry, supposedly of a vigorous nature, by the Nanking Government acting under pressure applied by the British Legation.

This inquiry has already begun but the information as to the manner of its commencement is alone suspicious in character as the Chinese military authorities have refused permission to Mr. Frank Aveling, British Legation representative on the spot under instructions from Sir Miles Lampson, to accompany the committee of inquiry during the course of their investigations.

On June 27 representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of War at Nanking left for Soochow in connection with this inquiry, Mr. Aveling was informed. They had strict instructions to investigate thoroughly the reports in circulation about Thorburn being under detention by the military authorities at Soochow.

At the same time as this information was conveyed to Mr. Aveling he was politely told that his association with the Government's investigators was not desired, for the reason already stated.

"We are, in fact, just as anxious to clear up this affair as you are," Mr. Aveling was told. That, and no more.

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL

C. &amp; S. B. REG.

No. S. B. D.

Date

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 1931

**THORBURN MYSTERY  
STILL UNSOLVED****British Authorities  
Unable To Make  
Statement**

There have been no developments in what has come to be known locally as the "Thorburn mystery," according to Mr. A. D. Blackburn, Superintending Consul of H.B.M. Consulate-General.

The inquiry started by Mr. Frank Aveling, personal representative of Sir Miles Lampson, H. M. Minister to China, is still in progress, according to Mr. Blackburn, who was unable, however, to disclose the nature of any progress made to date by Mr. Aveling.

The despatch to Soochow of Mr. Aveling, it will be recalled, followed closely upon the release to the press of Shanghai by the British Consulate of an official statement of the discoveries made by British Vice-Consul A. L. Scott, specially sent to Soochow to discover what had become of John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton believed to have fallen into hands of the Soochow military authorities.

Mr. Scott's inquiries pointed strongly to Thorburn being held a prisoner at Soochow and on the strength of this information, which was wirelessly to H. M. Minister in Peiping, Mr. Aveling was sent to press the Nanking Government for an immediate official investigation, a joint Sino-British Commission of Inquiry being suggested.

Mr. Aveling has already discussed the matter with Dr. C. T. Wang, Minister for Foreign Affairs, pressing for an immediate and full investigation. That was in the early part of last week. Since then, no further information has been vouchsafed by the local British consular authorities.

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 26.6.31

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 1931

# THORBURN INQUIRY TO BE PRESSED

Mr. F. Aveling Calls Upon  
Dr. C. T. Wang At  
Nanking

In connection with the alleged detention of John Thorburn, 19-year-old British subject, by the Soochow military authorities, it is understood that Mr. F. Aveling, representing Sir Miles Lampson, H. M. Minister to China, has already seen Dr. C. T. Wang, Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, and is pressing for an immediate inquiry.

Thorburn has been missing from his home since June 1, and the local British consular authorities have collected sufficient evidence to warrant the assumption that the missing Briton is being held a prisoner in a Soochow military prison and is, moreover, in bad physical condition at the present time.

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SHOOTING OF RAILWAY POLICE BY FOREIGNERS.

The Sun Pao publishes the following correspondence from Soochow:-

In connection with the recent killing of one and wounding of two of a group of military police while patrolling the railway line between Quinsan and Tsing Hoo and the subsequent arrest and detention of a foreigner in the Military Police Headquarters at Soochow, Mr. "Sa Ke To" ( ), the British Vice-Consul in Shanghai, yesterday (June 9) went to Soochow and enquired of the Hain Government whether the arrested person was a British subject or not, as an Englishman named "Wei Ian Tai Ma" ( ), age 18, was missing from Shanghai. He was informed by Magistrate Wang that he was awaiting instructions from the Military Police Headquarters. Magistrate Wang promised to notify Mr. "Sa Ke To" as soon as instructions were received. The British Vice-Consul returned to Shanghai the same night.

Extract for  
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10. 6. 31.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. B. REGISTRY

No. S. B. D. 2484

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**SHOOTING OF MILITARY POLICE BY FOREIGNERS.**

The Sin Wan Pao publishes the following letter from the Viceroy-Shanghai Garrison Commissioner's Headquarters:-

The report published by your paper on the killing of members of the Military Police near Tsing Kyi Railway Station on the night of June 1 does not correspond with the facts. We have received a letter from the Military Police reading as follows:-

On the night of June 1 a squad of Military Police were patrolling about 3 li to the west of the Tsing Kyi Railway Station, suddenly some desperadoes opened fire on them and in consequence 3 members were wounded. When the remaining force was in pursuit of the desperadoes, an express train passed and eventually separated the police and the desperadoes who, availing themselves of the opportunity, made good their escape. The police then made a thorough search but no arrests were made. The information published by various newspapers after this occurrence is mostly untrue and the report regarding the arrest of a foreigner is liable to give rise to a misunderstanding.

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 SHANGHAI  
 C. & S. REC.  
 No S. B. D. 2464  
 Date 22-6-31

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 1931

## DISAPPEARANCE OF JOHN THORBURN

### Possibility Of Official Statement By British Consul

An official statement upon the Thorburn mystery is likely to be forthcoming from the British Consular authorities within the next 24 hours. "The Shanghai Times" was informed yesterday, providing certain necessary formalities at present in motion are completed to the satisfaction of the authorities concerned.

The British Consular authorities, who have been making the fullest possible investigation into this affair in the face of many obstacles placed in their path, it is believed, by officials, outside the Settlement have reached the conclusion that the situation demands the full light of publicity and permission of the British Minister at Peiping is being sought for that purpose.

John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton, left his home on June 1 with an obscure intention and wandered along the Shanghai-Nanking railway line in the direction of Quinsan. There, it is believed, he got himself into some sort of trouble with a party of Chinese soldiers whom he met, and there is strong evidence that he was subsequently arrested and taken to Soochow.

Definite denial of his arrest or detention has been given repeatedly by Chinese military officials at Soochow, notwithstanding much evidence to the contrary collected by British Consular officials and others who have carried out investigations on the spot.

Rumours of foul play have been in circulation and the British Consular authorities here are believed to be in possession of certain information which may eventually lead to the exchange of official notes with the Nanking Government.

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SHANGHAI TIMES  
C. & S. I. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
Date 19-6-31

THE SHANGHAI TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 1931

## HOPE FOR THORBURN VANISHING

### Conspiracy Of Silence At Soochow Proves Effective

Little hope is held out by the British consular authorities of tracing the whereabouts of John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton, who mysteriously disappeared from his home on the night of May 31-June 1. Practically every possible avenue of inquiry has been thoroughly investigated, and although the evidence that Thorburn fell into Chinese military hands continues to pile up, categorical denials that he did so, likewise continue to be received from Chinese sources.

For more than a week, Mr. A. L. Scott, British Vice-Consul, has been conducting an investigation at Soochow, but little or no light on the mystery has resulted. If anything, the mystery has deepened.

The past 24 hours brought to light one somewhat significant piece of information, however. It was the rumour that the First Regiment stationed at Soochow had been transferred to Kiangsi. It was a party of soldiers from this regiment, it is alleged, who were concerned in the shooting affair near Quinsan on or about June 2, which other rumours connected with the missing man Thorburn.

Notwithstanding the official denials issued by the Soochow military and judicial authorities that any foreigner had been concerned or arrested in connection with that incident, there is very strong evidence that a foreigner resembling young Thorburn was arrested by the Soochow military authorities and is being detained somewhere in Soochow. There is the alternative theory, unconfirmed rumours of which have already been in circulation in Shanghai, that young Thorburn was shot, but whether during the affair with the soldiers or in consequence of his part in that affair, may never be known.

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SHANGHAI M. & S. L. REGISTRY  
No. S. B. D. 2464  
18 - 6 - 31

THE NORTH-CHINA DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1931

## THE THORBURN MYSTERY

Fate of Missing Briton  
Still Unknown

### BELIEVED TAKEN TO SOOCHOW

Still no news has reached Shanghai of the whereabouts of Mr. John Thorburn, the young nineteen-year old Englishman who disappeared from home on June 1, was seen walking along the Shanghai Nanking Railway in the neighbourhood of Quinsan station and, apparently, has completely vanished.

Inquiries set on foot by the British authorities have been, so far, fruitless. Mr. A. L. Scott, who has been investigating the affair at Soochow, has returned to Shanghai. It is understood that the local Chinese officials have received no report either of Mr. Thorburn or of any incident connecting him with the affray in which two Chinese soldiers were wounded, one of them mortally. In fact, the statements of the Chinese officials as recorded in the "North-China Daily News" on Monday have not been substantially varied.

The fact remains that Mr. Thorburn has not been located. It is moreover ascertained, from reports reaching this office, that a foreigner, answering to his description, was seen in custody and so far as can be judged, was taken to Soochow. The denials of the local authorities are therefore taken to be based on information incompletely seized of the facts.

Obviously the matter cannot rest there. Mr. Thorburn's disappearance is seriously exercising the minds of his parents. The British authorities have made most careful investigations and it is probable that they will before long have to take the matter up formally with the Chinese Government. It is expected that a full statement of the facts as they have been elicited will be framed and representations made through the proper channels for steps to be taken in order to clear up the mystery.

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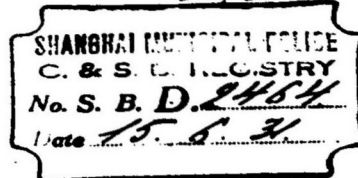
#### Mr. Thorburn's Fate

Whatever may be the conditions in the interior of China, it is very difficult to believe that a young foreigner can disappear into the blue within a few miles of Shanghai, without there being any trace of his whereabouts. It is still more difficult to believe in the face of the known facts about Mr. Thorburn's adventure. It is established that he was possessed of some idea of travelling on foot into China. It is admitted that he was seen walking on the railway line between Shanghai and Quinsan. There is a sufficient amount of cumulative evidence, circumstantial and otherwise to justify the theory that he was taken into custody by some Chinese who escorted him to Soochow. The time factor and, other personal details, gave grounds for the strongest presumption that he was in some way or another involved in the incident which led to the arrival at Shanghai of two wounded Chinese soldiers, one of whom subsequently died. Yet in spite of the assiduous inquiries of the British authorities, the information from official Chinese sources at Soochow fails entirely to support these deductions. That would not arouse comment if the Soochow officials could produce evidence of Mr. Thorburn's whereabouts. They apparently cannot. It would seem that the reports which they have received from their subordinates are defective. The matter is hardly likely to be allowed to rest there. It is to be hoped therefore that more insistent inquiries will be made through such channels as will produce reliable and reputable information on the subject.

Mr. P  
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Extract From the Morning Translation of

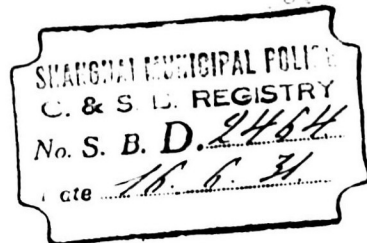
June 15, 1931.

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Shooting of two Military Policemen by Foreigner

The Sin Wan Pao published the following letter from the First Regiment Military Police on June 14 : -

"Re the shooting of two military police by desperadoes on the night of June 1 while patrolling near Tsing Nee ( ). On the night in question a thick fog set in and nothing could be seen at close range. When the military police patrol of this Regiment reached a place about 3 li to the west of the Tsing Nee Railway Station, some desperadoes suddenly opened fire on them and consequently two policemen were wounded. While the remaining police were in pursuit of the desperadoes, an express train passed and separated the police and the desperadoes, who, availing themselves of the opportunity, made good their escape. The police made a thorough search but made no arrests. These are the true facts of the case. The information published by various newspapers is mostly untrue; moreover, the report of the arrest of a foreigner is entirely groundless and it has incurred suspicion on the part of foreigners. For fear that the truth may still not be known to the public, we hereby request that a correction be published."



**BRITISH SUBJECT ALLEGED MISSING.**

The Pao Pao, a mosquito paper, publishes the following article:-

The British Consulate at Hanking received a letter from the British Consulate in Shanghai the day before yesterday stating that a British subject, resident of Shanghai named "Ka S Un" (?), age 18, surreptitiously left his home at the end of May, taking with him a pistol. This man is very quiet tempered. In a letter left by him he wrote that he desired to enroll with the Chinese army to suppress the Communists. It is not known ~~whether~~ whether he has reached Hanking or has joined the Chinese army. He is not in possession of a passport nor a pistol license. The British Consulate at Hanking have transmitted the original letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who in turn requested the Hanking Garrison Commissioner to make investigations.

*Extract for  
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THE CHINA PRESS, TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 1934

## New Evidence In Hands Of British In Thorburn Case

### Suspicion Persists That Youth Was Taken By Sootchow Police

Despite the fact that the Sootchow magistrate and gendarmes officer are still strongly denying that they have Mr. John Thorburn, 19-year-old Briton who has been missing from Shanghai since June 1, in their custody, British consular officials here have now more reason than ever to believe their statements untruthful, it was declared yesterday.

The Superintending consul, Mr. A. D. Blackburn, informed a representative of The China Press yesterday that local British authorities do not actually know the exact whereabouts of the missing youth but they are positive he is in Sootchow, in which city Mr. A. L. Scott, vice-consul in the Chinese Affairs office, is continuing his investigations.

#### Thorburn Seen In Sootchow

Whether young Thorburn is alive or dead is not known. British investigations have been carried out ever since the youth's mysterious disappearance, from his father's house, 315 Rue Bourgeat, on June 1, was reported. As a city-wide search was made for him here without success, the hunt was spread further afield.

The first important clue obtained was the statement of the station master of the Shanghai-Nankins Railway's Quinsan station. This official claimed to have seen a foreigner, answering exactly Thorburn's description, in the custody of Chinese gendarmes in Quinsan. Now, the number of people who have been Thorburn in the gendarmes' hands have swelled considerably for Mr. Scott has located a few persons who actually saw Thorburn, still in the hands of Chinese military, in Sootchow.

#### Cleared Of Shooting

Mr. Blackburn personally thinks the lad is in Sootchow and that the Chinese authorities, for some reason of their own, are deliberately hiding his whereabouts.

At first it was believed that Thorburn was connected in some

## New Evidence In Hands Of British In Thorburn Case

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)  
manner with the strange shooting affray on the railroad track in which two Chinese gendarmes received fatal wounds and have since died from them. This incident happened on the night of June 2, a day after Thorburn disappeared from his home in Shanghai.

#### Thorburn Cleared Of Charge

However, the commanding officers of the two gendarmes divisions in the Sootchow district informed Mr. Scott that no foreigner was involved in the case, their men being wounded by bandits. British authorities here, knowing that Thorburn was armed with a .45 caliber Shanghai Volunteer Corps revolver, were at first afraid the youth had been arrested in connection with the shooting and dealt with by the Chinese themselves.

The statements of the Chinese officers clear Thorburn of a particularly serious situation and now allow the youth's consular authorities to have a clearer field to work upon for his recovery irrespective whether he is dead or alive.

#### Keen On Outdoor Life

Young Thorburn was a quiet lad, very keen on all outdoor sports and life in general. An enthusiastic hockey player during the winter months, he is in the habit of devoting most of his time in summer to tennis or on the river. He was a Sea Scout and a live member

of the Drysdale Amateur Dramatic Club. In 1928, then a boy of 17, Thorburn started training, seriously to train for the International Walking Competition with the English team. After two weeks of gruelling work he was forced to abandon his idea of entering for the race as his legs gave out on him. Thorburn was a lad with a great amount of "go" in him and very popular in the younger set here.

The missing youth was supposed to have joined a boating party up at Hepli the day before he disappeared. Instead of doing so, however, he spent the day in Shanghai playing tennis at the Race Course in the afternoon and returning to his father's house to sleep that night. He left the following day after leaving a note to his father merely saying he was going up country.

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## NO LIGHT ON THOR- BURN MYSTERY

Vice-Consul Scott Fails  
To Return From  
Soochow

Officially, there have been no new developments in what has come to be known as the "Thorburn Mystery," which concerns the disappearance on the night of May 31-June 1 of 19-year-old John Thorburn, of 315, Rue Bourgest, who left his home for an uncertain destination and has not been heard of since.

Some light on the mystery was expected yesterday with the return to Shanghai from Soochow of Mr. A. L. Scott, British Vice-Consul, who went to Soochow early last week in an effort to discover anything which might lead to the solution of the mystery. The missing youth is a British subject.

Inquiries made yesterday found Mr. Scott still at Soochow and his postponed return might possibly be attributed to his having discovered something new in connection with the case, as he was expected to return last Saturday.

One of the most important developments in the case has been the denial by Chinese military authorities that the Quinsan shooting incident of nearly two weeks ago, in which three Chinese gendarmes lost their lives, in any way concerned foreigners. It was feared that Thorburn had, in some way, become embroiled in an argument with Chinese soldiers and had made use of a pistol he is alleged to have taken away with him on May 31.

However, the Chinese declare not only that no foreigner was mixed up in that affair but also that they have no foreigner in custody at the present time, this notwithstanding considerable evidence to the contrary collected at Soochow, Quinsan and other points in that vicinity.

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16/6/31

## Mystery Deepens In Thorburn Case

### Young Britisher Lost In Uplands May Be Dead

Is young John Thorburn, British subject, dead or alive and is he, if alive, being detained by the Soochow authorities?

These questions today are puzzling the local British authorities as the investigation into the whereabouts of the young man ordered by Sir Miles Lampson, British Minister to China, continues at Soochow and Quinsan.

Of the following the British consulate general here is almost certain:

#### Left Home May 31

Thorburn, who is 19 years of age, left his home here on May 31, leaving a note in which he informed his father that he was "going up-country."

Thorburn was armed, carrying a loaded pistol and was wearing attire of the machine gun company, Shanghai Volunteer Corps, of which he is a member, but which would be better suited for dress parade.

#### Seen In Custody

On June 2, according to definite information received by the British consulate general from disinterested witnesses, the young man was seen in the custody of the gendarmerie near Quinsan.

The British authorities here, according to Mr. A. D. Blackburn, superintending consul, have reason to believe that Thorburn was seized by the gendarmerie in connection with the shooting of two soldiers on the railway line near Quinsan on the night of June 1.

#### Taken To Soochow

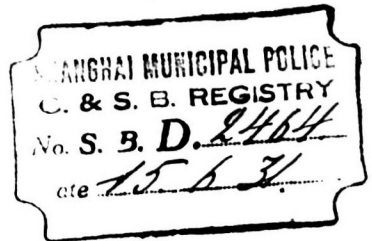
The consulate general also has reason to believe that the youth was taken to Soochow, where the headquarters of the gendarmerie are located, and that he either is dead or is badly injured and is being held by the gendarmerie.

After the strange disappearance of the youth had been reported to the consulate general and reported in turn to the British Minister, Mr. A. L. Scott, vice-consul of the Chinese Affairs Department, was sent to Soochow and Quinsan to conduct an investigation. At Quinsan Mr. Scott, who still is at Soochow, ascertained from a responsible person that the young man had been seen in the custody of the gendarmerie.

#### Chinese Denials

Since that time the Chinese authorities at both Quinsan and Soochow stoutly have denied that Thorburn had been or is in custody, or that any foreigner had been connected with the fatal shooting of the two soldiers.

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SHOOTING OF TWO MILITARY POLICEMEN BY TUNGHSU.

3mt.  
15/6/31

The Min Sun has published the following letter from the First Regiment Military Police on June 14:-

"Re the shooting of two military police by desperadoes on the night of June 1 while patrolling near Tsing Kee ( ). On the night in question a thick fog set in and nothing could be seen at close range. When the military police patrol of this Regiment reached a place about 3 li to the west of the Tsing Kee Railway Station,

June 18, 1931.

Morning Translation

**MURDER CASE**

some desperadoes suddenly opened fire on them and consequently the policemen were wounded. While the remaining police were in pursuit of the desperadoes, an express train passed and separated the police and the desperadoes, who, availing themselves of the opportunity, made good their escape. The police made a thorough search but made no arrests. These are the true facts of the case. The information published by various newspapers is mostly untrue; moreover the report of the arrest of a foreigner is entirely groundless and it has incurred suspicion on the part of foreigners. For fear that the truth may still not be known to the public, we hereby request that a correction be published.

**An English Youth Missing.**

The China Times publishes the following

report:-

A local English youth named Thorburn, age 19, residing at No. 315 Rue Beaupré, has been missing since June 1 and so far his whereabouts are not known. On the day previous to his being reported missing, Thorburn planned to proceed to Henli, but later he abandoned the idea and went to the Race Course to play tennis. In the evening he returned home and went to bed. According to public opinion, he proceeded to quinson by train on the night of June 1, thence planned to walk to Henli. He has not been seen since June 2, and on the night of June 2 the case of the shooting of two military policemen by a foreigner at Waiting Railway Station took place. According to press reports, the guilty man was a Russian, but it was suspected that it might be Thorburn. Officials of the local British Consulate-General stated that the Station Master at quinson had seen a foreign youth arrested and detained by the military police and that his attire quite resembled that of Thorburn. In consequence the British Vice-Consul Mr. Scott went to Soochow, but enquiries made at the Military Police Headquarters revealed that no foreigner was concerned in the affair which took place on the night of June 2 and that no foreigner had been arrested and detained. Therefore the real facts of the case are not known for the time being and enquiries are being continued.

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ORIGINAL MUNICIPAL POLICE  
C. & S. D. REGISTRY  
B. D. 2464  
15 - 6 - 31

## MYSTERY STILL DEEPER

No Further News of Mr.  
John Thorburn

### QUINSAN INQUIRIES

#### How the Soldiers Were Shot

SPECIAL TO THE N.C.D.N.

"No foreigner was involved at all in the shooting affair which occurred near Weiting Station on the night of June 1 when two gendarmes were fatally wounded," said Col. Tsing Tsung-ying, Commissioner of Public Safety, at Quinsan, when interviewed yesterday by a representative of the "North-China Daily News" who paid a special visit to that place to make inquiries into the disappearance of Mr. John Thorburn, a 19-year old British subject, who has been reported missing for nearly two weeks.

Asked whether he had received any reports of foreigners being found dead or wandering about in the vicinity of Quinsan, or whether any foreigner had been arrested, Col. Tsing emphatically stated that he had received no reports to this effect and that no foreigner had been arrested. Had any such discoveries been made, he certainly would have been informed and he would have telegraphed at once to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because he had received orders from the Waichiaopu and the Kiangsu Provincial Government to submit, without delay a report if any missing foreigner were found because he understood that the Waichiaopu had received an inquiry from the British authorities concerning the whereabouts of Mr. Thorburn.

#### A Futile Search

One of the purposes of the "North-China Daily News" representative in pursuing the inquiry was to find a certain English message. It is reported to have been written on the platform of the Quinsan Station. No such message was found, though every nook and corner of the station and points within a large radius of the station were carefully searched.

Accordingly, the investigator went to the headquarters of the First Battalion of the First Regiment of the Railway Zone Gendarmerie, to which the dead soldier belonged, and interviewed the officer in charge. This officer stated that he had read a report of the shooting affair which appeared in the Chinese press (a translation of which subsequently appeared in this journal) but it was incorrect in many respects. In the first place, only three soldiers were involved in the affair. In the second place, no foreigner was involved and no foreigner was arrested, though the report stated that a Russian had fired the shots and that he had been taken into custody.

#### Chinese in Long Gowns

"I personally interviewed the wounded soldiers before they were brought to Shanghai, where they later died on June 7 and 12 respectively, and took their statements. Both these men, together with the third soldier who was in their company, stated that the shooting was done by a Chinese who wore a long gown: there were eight or nine in all. The soldier who is still alive is absolutely sure of this fact that he is equally certain that it was not a foreigner who fired the shots," the officer told the "North-China Daily News."

"The three gendarmes started out from Quinsan to patrol the railway zone and reached a spot about three or four li to the east of Weiting Station when the shooting occurred on the night of June 1. As soon as they noticed the eight or nine men wearing long gowns, they felt sure that they were tufei, (bandits) so they called upon them to halt and submit to search. Instead of doing so, one of the gang drew a pistol and opened fire, bringing down two of the gendarmes.

#### Swallowed Up in Darkness

The man started to chase them but it so happened that the Nanking night express was passing at full speed and the gangsters had crossed the line before the train arrived. When the train had passed, the soldier searched for the gang but found that all of them had disappeared in a most mysterious manner in the darkness. Accordingly, no arrests were made."

This statement was confirmed by Col. Tsing, the Commissioner of Public Safety, and the gendarme who gave chase.

15/6



## Rail Man Says Thorburn Seen In Hands Of Police

British Consular Officials Continue To Look Into  
Possibility That Lost Youth Is In Custody  
Of Soochow Gendarmerie

Until a late hour last night the actual whereabouts of Mr. John Thorburn, 19 year old Briton who mysteriously disappeared from June 1 from his father's house, 315 Rue Bourgeat, and has since not been seen, could not be discovered. British consular authorities here, however, continue to work on the theory that the youth is in the custody of Chinese military in Soochow though the latter have disclaimed the rumor that they have a foreigner in their hands.

Mr. A. L. Scott, British vice-consul in charge of Chinese affairs, is still in Soochow investigating the truth of the report about the foreigner in custody. His investigations, according to Mr. A. D. Blackburn, acting consul of the local British Consulate-General in Shanghai, are becoming more and more in evidence that the rumor is true and that the foreigner is the boy, Mr. Thorburn. Officially it is known that the Chinese officials are looking for Thorburn.

Young Thorburn, it will be recalled, was supposed to have joined a boating party at Henli on the day previous to his disappearance but instead of so doing, he stayed in Shanghai, playing tennis on the Race Course during the afternoon and returning to his home to sleep that night. It is the general belief that Thorburn caught a late train for Quinsan, intending to walk the short distance from that station to Henli, on the following night. He was not seen at all during June 2 by friends in Shanghai.

Thorburn's disappearance was at first believed to have been connected with the strange shooting affray which occurred at a point

near the Quinsan Station on the night of June 2. Four Chinese soldiers were doing patrolling duty on the railroad line when a man, whom they believed to have been a foreigner, suddenly appeared before them. When this man was ordered to halt he, it is claimed, pulled out a revolver and opened fire mortally wounding two of the soldiers, Shen Lih-seng and Leo Kuo-tsai, both of whom have since died, before making a getaway. The wounded men were brought to Shanghai and conveyed to St. Luke's Hospital where they passed away.

### Arrested Foreigner Seen

According to the British Consular authorities here, the station master at Quinsan has acknowledged having seen a foreign youth, dressed as a Sea Scout, in the custody of Chinese military.

The station master's description of the foreigner corresponds with young Thorburn. The missing youth was a keen Sea Scout and it is quite likely that he was in uniform for he, presumably, was on his way to join a boating party.

### Important Point Cleared

Mr. Blackburn informed a representative of The China Press yesterday afternoon that the British Consulate here had received word from Mr. Scott to the effect that the Chinese military officials in Soochow have informed him that there had been no foreigner involved with the shooting affray on the railroad lines on the night of June 2. This is a very important factor in the case as it clears young Thorburn of a particularly nasty predicament.

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## Thorburn Mystery Inquiry Launched

### Disappearance Of Local Youth Linked With Shooting Affray

Official inquiry into the mysterious disappearance on June 1 of Mr. John Thorburn, 19-year-old British employee of Dodge & Seymour, Ltd., and the strange shooting on the night of June 2 between Quinsan and Welting on the Shanghai-Nanking railway has been in progress for several days. British consular authorities here revealed today.

Mr. A. L. Scott, British vice-consul, has visited Soochow twice during the past few days in an effort to clear up the mystery of Mr. Thorburn's disappearance, which has been linked with the shooting. Military and civil authorities, however, deny having arrested a foreigner in connection with the Quinsan affair.

#### Two Soldiers Killed

The shooting, which resulted in the death of two Chinese soldiers stationed at Quinsan, took place after dusk, according to testimony introduced at the inquest here this morning over Shen Ith-seng, one of the dead soldiers. He and three others were patrolling the road between Quinsan when a foreigner appeared, who, when ordered to halt, is said to have opened fire. Shen and a comrade named Lee Kuo-tsai were mortally wounded. The former died last week while Shen passed away yesterday at the St. Luke's Hospital here.

Reports received from Soochow after the shooting stated that a foreigner had been arrested and the British consular officials immediately took steps to investigate. The foreigner, the reports stated, was either Russian or British.

#### Bullet Stamped "OSSE"

At the inquest over Shen Ith-seng today, a verdict of death due to bullet wounds was returned by Procurator Quo, sitting as coroner. The only clue that might lead to the identity of the man believed responsible for the shooting was a bullet taken from the body of the dead man, bearing the stamp "OSSE."

*W.E.*

*Keg. Please add to file. J.H. 15:6:31*

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ANGLO SINO  
C. & S. 1200  
S. B. D. 2464  
14-6-31

THORBURN MYSTERY  
GROWS DEEPER

Soochow Witnesses Say  
They Saw Foreigner  
Arrested

SILENCE MAINTAINED  
BY MILITARY

A conspiracy of silence appears to have been adopted by Chinese military officials at Soochow over the disappearance of John Thorburn, a British youth residing with his father Mr. W. J. Hay at 215 Rue Bourgeat, who left his home on June 1 under somewhat unusual circumstances and has not returned since.

"The Shanghai Times" inquiries started several days ago following receipt of information to the effect that a youth answering to the description of Thorburn had been seen in custody of Chinese soldiers at Soochow, far from being disproved by recent investigations point more strongly, in fact, to the correctness of the original report.

In support of this Mr. A. L. Scott, British Vice-Consul, has been in Soochow since Tuesday, June 8, investigating similar reports and is still at Soochow it was learned yesterday.

Thorburn's investigation shows, left his home at Rue Bourgeat on June 1, without giving any information as to his intended movements. Nothing was heard of or from him for several days, although the police had been notified of his prolonged absence.

Some indication of where to look for him was received from a report to the effect that a young foreigner had been seen walking along the railway track between Shanghai and Soochow in the direction of the latter place.

Efforts, emanating from sources, endeavoured, by and circumstantial to link up the missing youth with a peculiar shooting incident which occurred near Quinsan where four Chinese gendarmes were killed upon by a foreigner when an attempt was made by them to search and detain him. One of the gendarmes died shortly afterwards. The others who were wounded were transferred to St. Luke's hospital, Shanghai. One of them died of his wound a day or two after arrival. The other died on Thursday evening.

Nanking Also Silent

Whether or not there is any connection between Thorburn's disappearance and the shooting incident is immaterial beside the question of Thorburn's whereabouts at the present time. Also, that Thorburn is alleged to have taken a pistol, an S.V.C. weapon, away with him when he left home on June 1, is also a secondary point for consideration pending discovery of the youth himself.

The father of the missing youth is understood to have paid a personal visit to Nanking to consult the military authorities to see if

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they had any information which might lead to the discovery of his son. They had none.

Likewise, Soochow military officials expressed complete ignorance when questioned concerning young Thorburn. No one answering to his description had been arrested by them, they stated. They are understood to have gone so far as to deny having any foreigner at all!

Independent inquiry has revealed several important points which would tend to contradict the assertions of the Soochow military.

#### Foreigner Seen

In the first place, there is indisputable evidence that a foreigner was seen marching through the streets of Soochow last week in the custody of Chinese gendarmes. Careful questioning at Soochow has also revealed that the foreigner seen marching off in the direction of military headquarters was wearing a pair of trousers of an unusual type which answer the description of a pair belonging to young Thorburn which are missing from the wardrobe.

Furthermore, in support of the evidence of the arrest of a foreigner by Chinese gendarmes at about the time in question, there is the statement by someone travelling by train from Quinsan to Soochow that a foreigner was removed from the train by Chinese gendarmes at Soochow.

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SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE	
C. & S. B. REGISTRY	
No. S. B. D.	2464
Date	11. 6. 31.

Extract from the Afternoon Translation  
of June 10, 1931

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Shooting of Railway Police by Foreigner

The Shun Pao publishes the following correspondence from Soochow : -

In connection with the recent killing of one and wounding of two of a group of military police while patrolling the railway line between Quinsan and Tsing Neu and the subsequent arrest and detention of a foreigner in the Military Police Headquarters at Soochow, Mr. "Sa Ko To" ( *Sa* ) the British Vice-Consul in Shanghai, yesterday (June 9) went to Soochow and enquired of the Hsien Government whether the arrested person was a British subject or not, as an Englishman named "Wei Lin Tai Ba" ( ), age 19, was missing from Shanghai. He was informed by Magistrate Wong that he was awaiting instructions from the Military Police Headquarters. Magistrate Wong promised to notify Mr. "Sa Ko To" as soon as instructions were received. The British Vice-Consul returned to Shanghai the same night.

*D. L. (Brune)*

*Information*

*J. H. Guerin*

*D. 4c S. 10*

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## ALLEGED CRIME BY FOREIGNER

### Shooting Affair on the Nanking Railway

### HELD BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES

A foreigner, stated to be of Russian nationality, was arrested by Chinese soldiers on the Shanghai-Nanking Railway, between Quinsan and Weiting stations, on Tuesday morning on a charge of being concerned in the murder of two Chinese gendarmes in the vicinity of Weiting Station on the previous night. The foreigner, who was found in possession of two pistols, is being detained by the Quinsan military authorities pending investigations.

According to a statement made by the military authorities to the Chinese press, the two gendarmes who are alleged to have been murdered by the foreigner were detailed with 14 others to Quinsan on patrol duty between that station and Weiting. Four left the train at Weiting to patrol the railway zone. At about 10 p.m., when these four men reached a spot about a mile from Weiting, they noticed a tall man walking along the track. They shouted to him and called upon him to stop and submit to search. The man is said to have obeyed and raised his arms but, when two of the gendarmes approached him, they noticed that he was a foreigner. As they attempted to search him, the man, who is said to have held a pistol in his hand, suddenly opened fire on them badly injuring them. The other two soldiers, who had remained standing some distance away, ran up to investigate but the foreigner escaped in the darkness.

#### Foreigner Arrested

A search was made but, as the foreigner could not be found, the wounded men were taken to the Weiting Station and brought to Shanghai but they died after being admitted to hospital here.

On Tuesday morning, says the report, soldiers stationed on the railway arrested a suspicious-looking foreigner between Weiting and Quinsan and found him in possession of two pistols. He was questioned as to the shooting on the previous night but denied all knowledge of it. He was taken to Quinsan, where he is still being detained pending investigations.